THE INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

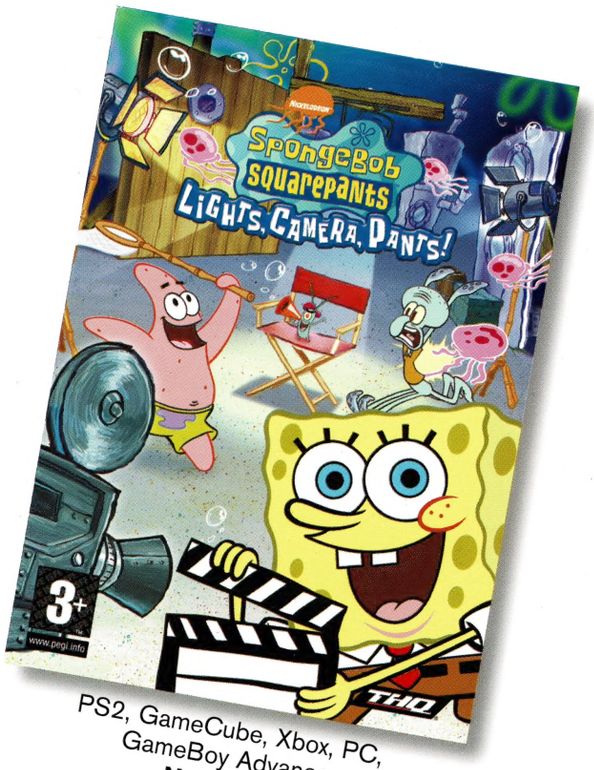
MCV

Friday September 16 2005 **£3.25**

GREAT GAMES
GREAT XMAS!

THQ®

PS2, GameCube, Xbox, PC, GameBoy Advance, Nintendo DS
Nov 11th



PS2, GameCube, Xbox, PC, GameBoy Advance
Nov 18th

GREAT GAMES
GREAT XMAS!

THQ

PS2, GameCube, PC, GameBoy Advance
Oct 14th

PS2, GameCube, Xbox, GameBoy Advance, Nintendo DS
Sept 23rd

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Issue 354 Friday September 16 2005 **£3.25**

MCV

EVERY BUYER ● EVERY BRANCH ● EVERY INDIE ● EVERY WEEK

INCORPORATING CTW

4 **Show down**
The State of Play consumer event collapses

6 **Who's the daddy?**
Mobile gaming will win mass market sector says I-play

22 **Back to basics**
It's got Xbox right. Now Microsoft is focusing on PC, too

WITH THIS ISSUE

A dedicated supplement detailing the marketing, software and strategies lined-up for Nintendo's unprecedented three-pronged assault on the handheld market

First punches thrown

Survey reveals King Kong to be the favourite at retail ● BVG roars back with Narnia

by Lisa Foster

THE TENSION won't be quite as fierce as it was last year, when EA bought a stake in Ubisoft against management's wishes, but this Christmas will see the two publishers go head-to-head for the number one slot – and, right now, it looks like it is the French games firm that is heading for a trés joyeux noel.

A trade survey of publishers, distributors, retailers and media has positioned Ubisoft's *King Kong* as the most likely Christmas number title, thanks to the strength of the licence, the timing of the movie (15/12) and the quality of the game.

EA is tipped to claim the next three positions in the Xmas chart, with *NFS: Most Wanted, FIFA 2006* and *Harry Potter: Goblet of Fire.*

But if the games giant does only claim three of the top 10 titles this Xmas, it will mark a huge shift from EA's traditional dominance during Q4. Last year it claimed six of the top 10 Xmas titles; seven in 2003. This means that the festive fruits may be spread across a greater number of firms. And they're all hoping for that top spot.

Buena Vista Games has the game of this season's other blockbuster movie, *The Chronicles of Narnia.* The film hits cinemas on December 5th, two weeks ahead of *King Kong*, with the game arriving even earlier on November 25th. And BVG's country director Matt Carroll has fittingly roared back at Ubisoft.

"We'll beat *King Kong.* Mr Cooper can think what he likes about it," he told *MCV.* "It's the opinion of all retailers I've been speaking to that *Narnia* will be Christmas number one. It's a very festive game and I think the market will be more suited to the kind of seasonal impulse buy this year with no game like *GTA* dominating."

> *"We'll beat King Kong. Mr Cooper can think what he likes about it. All retailers I've spoken to think Narnia will be Christmas number one."*
>
> ***Matt Carroll, BV Games***

THE XMAS TOP 10?

An MCV survey of 25 leading publishers, distributors, retailers and media has predicted the Christmas top-sellers...

1. King Kong ..... Ubisoft
2. NFS Most Wanted ..... EA
3. FIFA 2006..... EA
4. Harry Potter: Goblet .... EA
5. GTA PSP .. Rockstar/Take 2
6. Nintendogs..... Nintendo
7. Buzz..... SCEE
8. Football Manager ..... Sega
9. Narnia..... BV Games
10. Shadow The Hedgehog . Sega

THE OUTSIDERS

Bully and 24 have now slipped to next year, but there are a number of other titles that could well make the Xmas charts...

Path of Neo ..... Atari
Pro Evolution Soccer 5... Konami
Project Gotham Racer 3... Microsoft
From Russia With Love .... EA
Star Wars Battlefront 2... LucasArts
Crazy Frog..... Digital Jesters

More blood, guts and gore

HILLARY CLINTON wouldn't approve, but stalwart UK developer Blitz Games has set up a new mature-content label to provide lashings of blood, guts, gore and entrails for older gamers.

Under the slogan 'mature games for mature gamers', the Volatile label marks a huge shift in focus for the Oliver twins' studio that is more used to creating games like *Barbie Horse Adventures* and *Bratz.*

"In forming the new label we're to develop more mature-themed titles whilst maintaining the integrity of the Blitz brand for family-oriented games," said bloodthirsty Blitz CEO Philip Oliver.

The first title under the label will be zombie-filled eat-'em-up *Possession* for next-gen systems, due in 2007. The firm, currently celebrating its 15th birthday, has recently signed three titles, including a major film licence, which will be announced shortly.

MCV INTERVIEW

Nintendo UK boss David Yarnton is unfased by the threat of PSP. DS is here, and now he's looking to the launch of Micro *Page 28*

"How is the market going to grow if it doesn't change and innovate?"

Buyers shuffle ahead of busy Q4 period

Reynolds returns to retail with EUK ● Foote heads to Sainsbury's ● GAME buyer quits

by Neil Long

KEY retail executives are moving in readiness for what is set to be a bumper end–of–year period, following a chaotic summer of recruitment.

Former GAME man Simon Reynolds will be leaving his current role of commercial director at budget specialist outfit Global Software Publishing to take up the position of trading manager at Entertainment UK on November 7th.

Reynolds will be replacing Alex Vines, who left EUK to move to GAME in the summer.

On the way out of EUK is Brian Foote, who has quit his longtime role as games buyer to move to ambitious supermarket giant Sainsbury's, where he takes up the reins as games and music buyer.

Change is also brewing at GAME, where buyer Lucy Sant will be leaving on September 27th to pursue interests outside the games industry.

The trio of moves continues this summer's raft of major changes in publishing and retail *(MCV 15/7).*

Along with senior changes at SCEE, Eidos, Ubisoft, Midway and Codemasters, GAME's recent Chelsea FC-style recruitment policy has brought in buyers from rivals HMV, Virgin, EUK and Blockbuster.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT: ***Reynolds is heading to EUK***

MEDIA 17 COMMENT & ANALYSIS 24 RETAIL 35 RECOMMENDED 36 NEW RELEASES 40 CHARTS 44

DIGEST

[MCV IN A MINUTE]

10tacle: Nick Porsche joins as head of localisation and quality assurance.

Activision: The publisher takes on Mark Allen as its new PR manager.

Climax: The company's expansion continues with several appointments including Vanessa Miles joining from EA.

Codemasters: Codemasters monopolises the recruitment ads as it prepares to bring in a wave of new faces.

Digital Jesters: *Bet on Soldier* makes waves in Campaign of the Week.

EA: *Black & White 2* is the pick of the bunch in Recommended this week.

EA: After the departure of two senior executives, David Gardner takes on the role of studio chief operating officer.

Eidos: *Conflict: Global Storm* takes aim at Recommended.

Focus: The budget publisher reveals new Ubisoft range.

Gamer.TV: Ian Sharpe fills the boots of departed Chris Noone as head of visual magic and business development.

Gizmondo: The handheld is reborn as a wave of new models are announced.

I-play: David Gosen claims mobile gaming will grow beyond console gaming.

Macrovision: The company announces the appointment of James Budge as executive vice president.

Nintendo: The gaming giant makes tentative steps into mobile phone content services in Japan.

Nokia: Despite its plans for Series 60 expansions, the Finnish giant assures retail about the future of N-Gage.

Oxygen: The firm prepares for massive expansion over the next three months.

Pinnacle: The distributor prepares its new magazine for retail.

Retro Gamer: The remnants of Live team up to create new magazine.

Rockstar: *GTA: Liberty City Stories* hits Europe on October 28th.

Sega: The rejuvenated publisher signs a top-secret game from *Project Gotham's* Bizarre Creations.

Sony: PS2 'does an Xbox' as Sony initiates its own power-cord replacement scheme amid safety fears.

Sony: Phil Harrison takes charge of Sony's global games strategy following the formation of SCE WWS.

State of Play: Consumer event State of Play is scrapped.

Ubisoft: *Rainbow Six Lockdown* jumps straight to the top of the All Formats top 40.

Uncooked Media: Another mag prepares to hit the shelves as *360 Gamer* gears up for launch.

NEWS

Death of the big

Ambitious NEC event fails just like ExCeL attempt ● Microsoft and

by Stuart Dinsey

THE UK GAMES market may have just about clung onto the concept of a valid annual trade show, but the general public is highly unlikely to be attending a pan-industry consumer event again for many years.

State Of Play, due to have taken place at the Birmingham NEC in the middle of next month, has officially collapsed – meaning that two ambitious gamer shows have now been axed within six months.

Game Stars Live was cancelled earlier this year by London ExCeL's frustrated organising company after just one fairly undistinguished outing last September.

It had also failed despite a huge investment in it by leading companies such as EA and the highly vocal support of publisher trade body ELSPA.

Major companies such as Electronic Arts, again, and Microsoft had backed State of Play to take its place.

The hope was for a more lifestyle-orientated event, run by a far more experienced outfit with strong media and power brand links, but further support from games companies failed to materialise.

Organiser Mark Adams recently made a forlorn plea for more backing.

"Software publishers have all voiced the opinion that the industry really needs a Q4 consumer show, but save for EA no one has actually signed on the dotted line," he said in a pan-publisher email.

> *"Games publishers are clearly not willing to pull together in the UK to support any kind of umbrella show. They each want to do their own thing."*

New Giz models loom

GIZMONDO boss Carl Freer has told *MCV* that the brand will be expanded with a range of new models to be revealed by the end of the year.

The new handsets will feature the existing set of core features and as-yet undisclosed extra functionality.

"We can confirm there are a range of products coming as part of a roadmap catering for different user demographics," Freer told *MCV*.

"We expect to be unveiling prototypes in the final quarter of this year. It's a particular strength of the convergence technology category that we don't have to take a one-size-fits-all approach, much like the mobile phone sector.

FREER: "We don't need to take a one-size-fits-all approach"

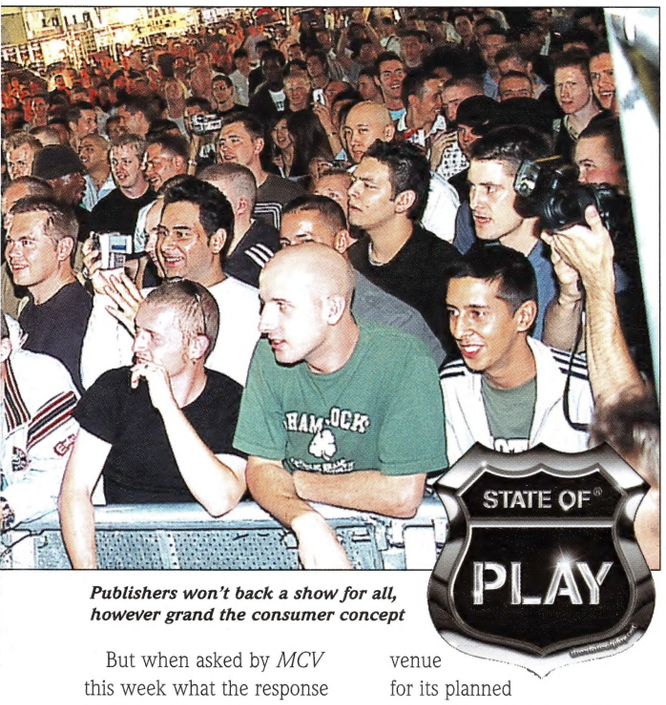
"We'll be expanding the functionality according to the target audience of each new development, and generating an upgrade path to ensure our hardware grows in line with their thirst for entertainment."

The original Gizmondo's satellite navigation package is to launch on September 30th at £199, and for the moment at least, the electronics giant is focusing on the current model.

Gizmondo: 01252 557 100

show idea

EA forced to re-think part of Q4 promo plans



Publishers won't back a show for all, however grand the consumer concept

But when asked by *MCV* this week what the response had been, Adams finally admitted that State Of Play had officially been "postponed".

Microsoft had offered format support, originally planning high profile promotion for its new Xbox 360 console, but this did not galvanise others as originally expected.

Electronic Arts, meanwhile, will now have to find a new venue for its planned FIFA Interactive World Cup event. It told *MCV* this week that new plans would be revealed shortly.

Games publishers are clearly not willing to pull together in the UK to support any kind of umbrella show, preferring events that meet their private budgets and strategies.

www.thestateofplay.net

Safety-first SCEE calms trade fears after adaptor recall

FOLLOWING the mass recall of hazard-risk PS2 slim AC adaptors, SCEE has moved to reassure consumers that the risk in PAL territories in particular, owing to local voltage, is minimal.

Sony on Monday (September 13th) announced the voluntary recall of all adaptors manufactured between August and December 2004, as they may 'overheat and cause an injury hazard to consumers'.

However, moving to ease fears, SCEE has insisted that, thanks to the voltage used by Europeans, the risk is small, with the firm's drastic action illustrating its responsibility to protect consumers.

"We've had five cases in the 104 territories that SCEE deals with and none of those has been anything other than overheating and failing; there have been no injuries out of potentially 2.3 million," a SCEE spokesperson told *MCV*.

"The situation is slightly different in the US. There have been 30 incidents reported there, with adaptors actually melting because of the heat."

In order to expedite the replacement of the affected adaptors – supplied with black slimline models SCGPH70002, 70003 and 70004 – SCEE has set up a dedicated website at www.ps2ac.com and a helpline number: 0800 555 516.

Consumer advertising began in *The Sun*, *The Mirror* and *The Times* earlier this week, continuing this weekend across Sunday titles such as *The News of The World*.

"We currently anticipate a turnaround of around 14 days for replacement," the Sony spokesperson added.

www.playstation.com

New mags enter danger zone

THREE magazines are launching into the already crowded, and depressed, games market this autumn.

New tri-weekly magazine *360 Gamer* is being launched by Uncooked Media, headed up by former PlayStation group editor at Paragon Darren Herridge, and is set to debut at Gamestation, Virgin, HMV, WH Smith and Asda stores on October 27th.

360 Gamer will also provide game content at 360gamer-disc.co.uk.

"This will be featured on and in the mag as a traditional disc and will offer a full disc's worth of new content each issue" said Uncooked Media's Tarik Alozdi.

Meanwhile James Pembroke Publishing is to re-design and relaunch its indie-distributed *Launch* consumer magazine, with former *PC Format* and Future stalwart Chris James at the helm.

Launch will be pushed by Pinnacle to indie stores across the UK from October 31st.

Tarik Alozdi launches 360 Gamer next month, Launch re-launched

Also in the pipeline is a new magazine formed from the ashes of *Retro Gamer*.

Retro Bytes is set for launch on November 22nd and will be published every six weeks. Boss of retro publisher Alten8 Paul Andrews is overseeing the project, and is currently finalising distribution details.

[ALL FORMATS] TOP 10

Week ending September 10th
Source: ChartTrack/ELSPA

1. ***TOM CLANCY'S LOCKDOWN*** UBISOFT, PS2, XBOX
2. ***BRIAN LARA 2005***, PS2, XBOX, PC — CODEMASTERS
3. ***DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK***, PS2, XBOX, PC — NOVALOGIC
4. ***RIDGE RACER***, PSP — SONY
5. ***HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION***, PS2, XBOX, GC — VU GAMES
6. ***VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR***, PSP — SEGA
7. ***MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION***, PSP — ROCKSTAR
8. ***WIPEOUT PURE***, PSP — ACTIVISION
9. ***NFSU: RIVALS***, PSP — EA
10. ***SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE***, PS2, XBXO — SEGA

[PRE ORDERS] TOP 10

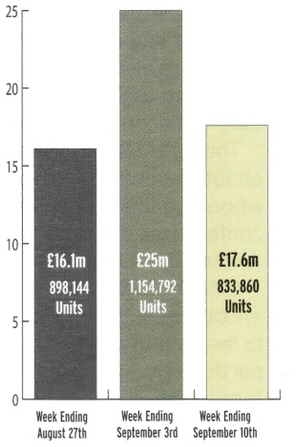
Week ending September 10th
Source: Amazon

1. ***THE SIMS 2: NIGHTLIFE*** EA, PC
2. ***XBOX 360 CONSOLE***, XBOX — MICROSOFT
3. ***FIFA 2006***, PS2 — EA
4. ***GTA: LIBERTY CITIES***, PSP — ROCKSTAR
5. ***PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5***, PS2 — KONAMI
6. ***ROME: TOTAL WAR***, PC — SEGA
7. ***BURNOUT LEGENDS***, PSP — EA
8. ***CIVILIZATION IV***, PC — TAKE 2
9. ***WARHAMMER 40,000: DAWN OF WAR***, PC — THQ
10. ***FOOTBALL MANAGER 2006***, PC — SEGA

amazon.co.uk and you're done.

[MARKET VALUE] £19.5m

Total UK Software Sales
Source: ELSPA/ChartTrack and Intent Media



[LEADER]

A WELCOME TASTE OF CHRISTMAS CHEER

THERE ARE still a couple of weeks to go before we officially enter Q4, but thoughts are most certainly turning towards Christmas.

Pubs and restaurants are advertising party deals, couples are already arguing about whose parents they spend the day with and, yep, it's really only a matter of time before the decorations are up in the department stores.

And, as our front page points out, in the games business the battle for the Christmas No.1 spot is already being waged. In our poll *King Kong* came out some way ahead as the favourite for this season's top-seller. But there is some way to go yet – and more variables still. How the movie performs will most certainly affect the performance of the game; *Narnia* is released at the cinema ahead of it, so could claim the

> *"The excitement and enthusiasm is returning to our corner of the High Street."*

accolade of the family blockbuster this Christmas, which will surely bolster sales of the game. And, of course, one can never under-estimate EA.

But the publishers' jostling for position aside, what is certain is that this festive season looks set to be a good one for all. And will no doubt bring some relief to specialist games retailers – who have all felt the pain over the dry summer months.

The excitement and enthusiasm is returning to our corner of the High Street – and nowhere was it more evident than at GAME's conference earlier this week.

Any suppliers taking time to attend the event will have had the opportunity not only to show off their Q4 line-ups, but also to witness some real passion from the store managers. For those of us not on the front line of the High Street, who are lucky enough to visit E3 or Microsoft's XO events, and treated to exclusive product previews, it's all too easy to become blasé about this industry.

Those GAME store staff are genuinely excited about the coming season. Indeed, I've not heard whooping like it outside of Nintendo press conferences. I'm sure I even caught the word "awesome" a couple of times.

Clearly that sort of behaviour shouldn't be encouraged. But maybe we could all learn a thing or two about celebrating our business – particularly when we've got so much to look forward to.

Lisa.Foster@intentmedia.co.uk

NEWS

Tub-thumping Gosen says mobile will win

Success of PSP and DS will not hold back mobile revolution, says I-play boss ● Ubiquity will mean true mass-market gaming

by Lisa Foster

GOSEN: "700m phones are sold each year. Who's the daddy now?"

I-PLAY COO David Gosen has applauded the launches of PSP and DS – but has warned Sony and Nintendo that the battle for the mass-market will be won by the mobile gaming industry.

Previously Nintendo Europe boss, Gosen underlined the significance of the Euro arrival of the respective handhelds from the format holders. But he has dismissed suggestions that they will have any impact on the growth of the mobile gaming sector.

"We are talking about completely different markets, with different consumers," he told *MCV*. "Mobile gaming is like snacking. We can offer small chunks of gaming. With console games – even a handheld console game – it's a three-course meal. You have to commit time to it."

The retort followed suggestions by industry watchers that the PSP and DS may cannibalise mobile phone game sales, with Wedbush Morgan senior analyst Michael Pachter offering: "Take a look at PC software sales in 1995 and in 2004 (flat over a nine-year period) and ask yourself why, given the incredible increase in household penetration of PCs. The answer, I believe, is that there is a better alternative to PC games – consoles.

"I see an analogy with mobile games, with PSP and DS providing a better alternative."

Unsurprisingly, it's a view that Gosen firmly opposes, pointing to the true portability of mobile phones.

"Where we will always win is in the fact that everyone always has their mobile phone with them. You don't necessarily go out with your PSP or DS. The phone is the complete entertainment system.

"We have a true mass-market proposition. If there is a battle, we will win.

"700 million phones are sold globally each year. Only 500 million consoles have been sold in the last 10 years. Who's the daddy now?"

www.iplay.com

Johnson's shift in Focus

FOCUS MULTIMEDIA boss Craig Johnson is promising to build on his company's Ubisoft tie-up and sign more games labels.

He told *MCV* this week that the publisher is on the verge of announcing a key partnership which will see the culmination of recent activity and investment in the sector.

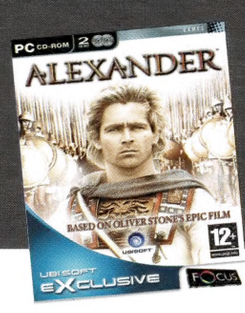
"This deal will give us a number of games and access to the children's market in a very big way," said Johnson. "It's fun products for children, games for kids.

Currently, the bulk of the firm's business is non-games, including the successful *Driving Test* range. But this new deal is set to shift the balance towards gaming.

"The games market is very important to us going forward; it's about 40 per cent of our business right now. But incorporating what we're doing with children, I see that swinging," added Johnson.

The firm has announced four new Ubi titles for its £9.99 Essential range – *CSI Dark Motives*, *Myst IV Revelation*, *Pacific Fighters*, and *Alexander*. All are due out this month.

Focus: 01889 570156



Nintendo loves Sony PSP

Anything that revitalises handheld sector is good for all, says UK boss David Yarnton ● But price pressure mounts on older Game Boy models ● Meanwhile, Nintendo takes 'dogvertising' to the streets

by Johnny Minkley

DISMISSING any notion that PSP presents a threat to Nintendo's handheld business in Europe, Nintendo UK boss David Yarnton has welcomed the arrival of the Sony's system, believing it will grow the market in tandem with his own firm's bold ambitions to the benefit of the entire video games community.

Speaking as Nintendo UK unleashed its biggest ever Christmas campaign, focused on targeting the widest possible audience, Yarnton believes his company's strategy is crucial to the future health of the industry.

"If you look at Japan over the past two years, the market has been shrinking – that's because people have been leaving gaming," he told *MCV*.

> *"The media attention our industry has had since the arrival of DS and PSP in unprecedented.*
>
> ***David Yarnton, Nintendo***

"Unless we start looking outside the sector, we'll still just be a small business."

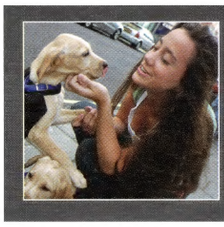
And having already achieved huge success this year with its DS handheld, the added focus on games brought by the arrival of PSP should be welcomed, he believes.

"How much media attention has our industry had since DS arrived and Sony started talking about PSP? It's unprecedented and I believe there is room in the market for both of us.

Elsewhere, with the trade confused by the £69.99 RRP for both SP and Micro, Yarnton refused to rule out a cut for the older system. "I cannot categorically say we won't do that, but our pricing strategies are something we need to keep confidential," he added.

Nintendo: 01932 895390

UNLIKELY ALLIES: Yarnton believes DS and PSP will grow the market



GONE TO THE DOGS

NINTENDO'S big Q4 hope is innovative DS title *Nintendogs*. Ahead of the October 7th release, the firm has launched a huge marketing drive, including what it calls 'Dogvertising' *(pictured)*. The firm is also sponsoring Channel 4 show *It's Me or the Dog*, which airs every Wednesday on Channel 4. *Nintendogs* recently became the best-selling new handheld game franchise ever in the US, racking up 250,000 sales in one week.

New N-Gages in the offing as Nokia pledges to get Smart

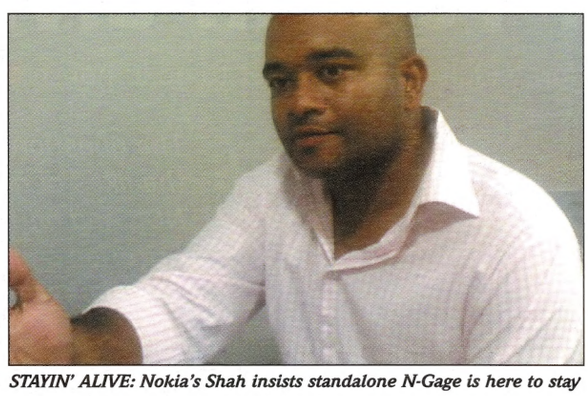
NOKIA has insisted that it remains committed to producing standalone gaming devices, as it prepares to formally unveil its plans for the evolution of the N-Gage brand onto Smart Phones.

With the Finnish telecommunications giant outlining the next stage of its N-Gage strategy at E3, many believed its underperforming QD gaming handset would gradually be wound down as the brand and technology made the logical switch, incorporated into the latest Smart Phone units.

But global marketing manager Kamar Shah has reaffirmed Nokia's commitment to a standalone device, revealing that the firm expects the format to grow in tandem with the burgeoning Smart Phone sector.

"We're definitely not winding down," Shah told *MCV*. "QD is still going; we've just launched the silver version and there are new games coming. It's still going strong and I think that will continue.

"We've got a great first-party line–up this quarter; that progression will carry on.



STAYIN' ALIVE: Nokia's Shah insists standalone N-Gage is here to stay

"You'll have people working on a basic set of tools that will be able to deliver for both N-Gage and Smart Phone devices. I expect that N-Gage will get better and I suspect we will have other devices in the future."

However, Shah admitted that Smart Phone handsets – which are predicted to number 250m by 2008 – hold the key to Nokia's long-term ambitions.

"The intention is to build the best," he said. "The best consumer experience, the best development and tools and the best distribution platform. And I think we're poised to be the best people to do that."

Nokia will launch N-Gage for Smart Phones in Q2 2006. Full plans will be unveiled at a dedicated event in Barcelona next month.

www.n-gage.com

NEWS

MS has learnt its Xbox stock lesson

Official distributor Gem says retail has no reason to panic over stock shortages for Xbox 360 ● Original console holding price

by Neil Long

DESPITE FEARS of a repeat of the stock shortages that blighted last year's Christmas trading, official Xbox 360 distributor Gem is confident that Microsoft has learnt its lesson. With timing and allocation details still yet to be announced with barely two months to the console's expected launch, Gem marketing director Dean Van Velsen told *MCV* that retail has no reason to get twitchy.

"Anything at the moment is pure speculation. What GAME is doing on pre-orders is very sensible. After last year's shortages, it's only natural to be hesitant, but what Microsoft does very well is learn from the past.

"We've come out of a difficult situation with Xbox last year, but we're really looking forward to 360."

As well as reassuring retail that the stock will be in place in time, Van Velsen also confirmed that Xbox will not be dropping in price, as expected in some quarters. "Xbox will continue as it is for the foreseeable future, as there's still a hefty difference in price between Xbox and 360."

"After last year's shortages, it's natural to be hesitant, but Microsoft has learnt from the past."

Dean Van Velsen, Gem

Xbox is currently available across retail at around the £99 mark, with the Xbox 360 core system set to hit retail at £210, and the full 360 system slated for a £280 price point.

Gem: 01279 822800

PSP chart invasion exposes other formats' sale slump

PSP blows a hole in the charts but sales betray soft under-belly of other formats

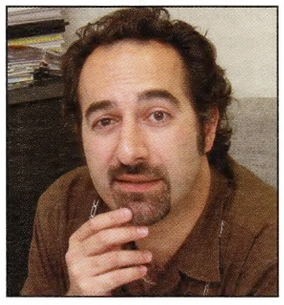
THE SUDDEN dominance of PSP titles in the All-Formats charts has revealed the current ease with which publishers can score a top-selling hit.

After the launch of Sony's new handheld, PSP titles took up nine out of the first ten spots for the week ending September 3rd.

A week later, the new all formats number one, Ubisoft's *Rainbow Six: Lockdown*, has become the lowest selling chart-topper since early 2004, according to ChartTrack.

"It's looking like being a tough year for sales; I wouldn't be surprised if the market is down year-on-year," games industry consultant Nick Parker told *MCV*.

"From a sales point of view I can't see the market growing at all. There's a lack of massive titles this year like *GTA*, *Half-Life 2* or *Need for Speed*," added Parker. "With the new consoles looming some people will not be investing as much in their consoles this Christmas."



BLOCH: Believes PSP spend has cut interest in other formats

ChartTrack's Dorian Bloch blames the dominance of Sony's handheld for the weak sales: "It seems anybody who had money has already spent it on PSP, as people don't go out and buy a piece of hardware every week. The following period is always going to be a little slower.

"The pent-up demand from the long wait for PSP had its effect in week 35, as other publishers wisely steered clear," he added.

"The following week it was back to school, a traditionally slow week."

ChartTrack: 020 8741 7585

Render rein-in divides opinion

No surprise as Criterion middleware looks set to go in-house ● But devs split over impact on industry

NEWS that Criterion's Renderware is likely to go in-house exclusively with EA *(MCV 9/10)* has met with a mixed response from the UK development community.

Following the firm's acquisition by EA, most viewed this as inevitable; but question marks remain over the impact on the industry.

"Since the acquisition, lots of devs have stopped using it or held off from using it like us," Bits CEO Foo Katan told *MCV*. "It's not surprising – why would EA want to run a division that is not super-profitable when it could have a competitive advantage?"

"It doesn't come as much of a surprise," agreed Team 17 studio director Martyn Brown. "I got the feeling from many publishers that some of the benefits of Renderware were effectively lost when it moved under the EA banner."

"The question now is, can the likes of newly-enlarged NDL and on-fire Epic take Criterion's place?"

Owain Bennallack, Develop

"It is a blow as it's always important to have options," added Katan. "In that respect Renderware's loss is not good for the industry."

Brown, however, disagrees: "Many current indie devs have since created their own tech so I can't see there being much impact. And for those without tech there are a number of viable and effective alternatives."

"The case for middleware hasn't gone away," commented *Develop* editor Owain Bennallack.

"The question is, can the likes of newly-enlarged NDL and on-fire Epic take Criterion's place?"

"You cannot ignore the fact that over a third of UK homes have a PC"
Garry Williams P25

Biggest ever marketing spend sees THQ doing it for the kids

Bratz, The Incredibles, Scooby-Doo and Spongebob form publisher's attack on Christmas children's market

by Johnny Minkley

THQ has unveiled its biggest ever marketing campaign as it throws its weight behind a quartet of kids' titles under the slogan 'Great Games, Great Xmas'.

The umbrella initiative will see joint promotion at retail, across print and on TV, of some of the biggest brands in entertainment, as the publisher seeks to differentiate itself from rivals and capitalise on the booming kids' sector.

THO hopes *Bratz: Rock Angelz, The Incredible: Rise of the Underminer, Spongebob: Lights, Camera, Pants* and *Scooby Doo Unmasked* will replicate the tremendous success achieved by last year's *Incredibles* title.

"The marketing campaign we've put together is going to be our biggest marketing to date, likely to be 50 per cent up on what we did with *The Incredibles* last year," product marketing manager Angela Bateman told *MCV*.

"We believe that at this time of year, looking at how well *The Incredibles* did at the end of last year, these titles are going to be big at Christmas. Scooby Doo's been a massive evergreen property for us for years, Spongebob has come off the back of US success, and is now breaking the UK with his movie, and Bratz is the number one girls' brand, so we're perfectly poised."

Bateman also revealed that THQ had secured major TV sponsorship for the campaign. "It's the first time THQ has ever done any terrestrial sponsorship.

"The response we've had from retail has been very positive. They can see it's not just working the four new titles, but also the extensive back catalogue we have."

THQ: 01483 767656

> *"This campaign is likely to be 50 per cent up on what we did with The Incredibles last year."*
>
> ***Angela Bateman, THQ***

THE FAB FOUR:

THQ's winter of content centres around games based on four massive kids' brands:

Bratz: Rock Angelz (PS2, GC, GBA, PC) - October 14th

Scooby Doo Unmasked: (PS2, Xbox, GC, GBA) - September 16th (DS, November 11th)

Spongebob Squarepants: Lights, Camera, Pants! PS2, Xbox, GC, GBA, PC) - November 18th

The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer (PS2, Xbox, GC, DS, GBA, PC)- November 11th *(pictured)*

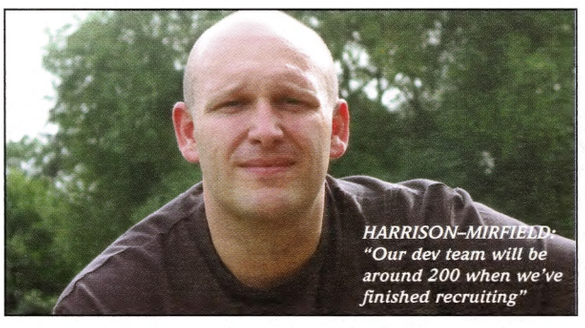
Coders' talent search begins

Publisher seeking some 100 new faces for development, MMO support, tech staff, marketing and Funsta.com

CODEMASTERS has kicked off its biggest ever recruitment drive that will see over a hundred new faces join the publisher in the next two years.

The increased demand on development teams working on next-gen titles, new online games portal funsta.com and big plans for the MMO market means that Codemasters is stepping up operations.

"Our total development department will be in the region of 200 when we're finished recruiting," HR director Stephen Harrison Mirfield said. "We're planning to take on over a hundred people in the next two years and not just in development. There's also MMO support and technical staff, marketing and Funsta.com as well."


HARRISON-MIRFIELD: "Our dev team will be around 200 when we've finished recruiting"

> *"Codemasters has always been a mark of quality; now we're looking to make more quality titles."*
>
> ***Harrison-Mirfield, Codemasters***

The programming and art departments will be the primary areas of growth. "Codemasters has always been a mark of quality, and now we're looking to make more of these quality titles," said Harrison-Mirfield. "We don't want to be the next EA, we want to be the next Codemasters. Essentially we're doing away with the studio model to make up one big studio. We've currently got four titles in progress and it's likely we'll be starting on another fairly soon."

Codemasters: 01926 814132

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NEWS

Gotham studio shoots into all-star cast at Sega

Liverpool outfit behind Microsoft's Project Gotham expected to add shooting game to Sega portfolio ● Latest deal follows Petroglyph RTS tie-up, but more promised

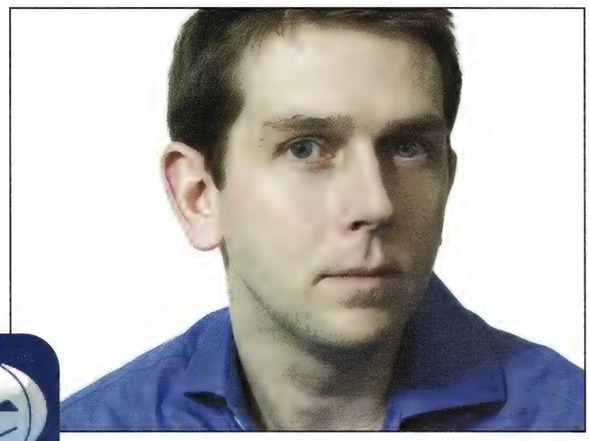
by Stuart Dinsey

SEGA continued its emergence as the Chelsea FC of the games world this week, making two more big signings and again talking about the need to "cover all gaps with genuine quality".

Latest additions to the Japanese giant's squad are a top secret game from Liverpool studio Bizarre Creations, which is believed to be in the shooting genre, and a new RTS franchise from highly rated US developer Petroglyph.

These follow agreements with Sports Interactive, Silicon Knights, Secret Level, Monolith, Pseudo Interactive and Creative Assembly, as Sega continues to westernise and widen its portfolio.

"We're always looking to add quality and it's nice to be able to talk about a deal when it is completed. Bizarre Creations is a brilliant company, with technical and gameplay excellence," Matt Woodley, creative director of Sega Europe and America, told *MCV*.



APPETITE FOR PRODUCTION: Woodley and Sega want more

> *There are still some gaps in our schedule and we very much retain a hunger for new products.*
>
> ***Matt Woodley, Sega***

"It is another one on the list of games we needed, but there are still some gaps in our schedule and we retain a hunger for new products."

Bizarre Creations is a 65-strong outfit based in Liverpool, also working on *Project Gotham Racing 3* for Microsoft.

The new Sega title will appear in FY2007, across next-gen formats, with first previews expected at E3 in May.

Sega: 020 8995 3399

EA warned: Don't go Russian in

TOP MOSCOW-BASED publisher 1C has warned EA that it has a difficult task moving into and developing the potentially huge Russian market.

After *MCV* revealed EA's plans to move into Russia *(19/8)*, 1C's international sales director Nikolay Baryshnikov has said that while the US giant boasts massive financial might, trying to change the 'four dollars for everything' market will be tough.

"The existing system has been working perfectly since 1999, so it will be very tough to affect things as they stand," said Baryshnikov *(right)*.

"EA will bring in some nice marketing money and will try to open up the sector that way, but knowledge of the Russian market is most important."

EA's search for a Russian boss and the rumoured development studio in Moscow shows that the publisher has plans to tailor its efforts toward the needs of the market there, which is dominated by PC games.

Many games are still sold through kiosks rather than High Street chains, and piracy is rife. PS2 has a small presence in the territory, with other formats like Xbox and GC almost non-existent.

HOME ADVANTAGE: How do you say 'bring it on!' in Russian?

> *EA will bring in some nice marketing money, but knowledge of the Russian market is most important.*
>
> ***Nikolay Baryshnikov, 1C***

[IN BRIEF]

Xbox 360 goes Live
Microsoft's next-gen online service will be available in two expensive-sounding packages: the Silver service available out of the box, and the Gold package, available for £39.99. Silver gives access to the online community, voice and text messages and Xbox Live Arcade games. Gold offers the full online multi-player experience. Payment will also no longer require a credit card, as participating retailers will be able to accept cash or debit card payments instead.

Ottakar's warms to HMV
Bookstore chain Ottakar's has recommended that its shareholders accept a takeover bid from High Street giant HMV rather than one from the company's management. HMV had previously launched a 440p per share bid for the firm, an increase on the management's bid of £4 a share.

GTA ready for Europe
Rockstar has confirmed that the highly-anticipated PSP instalment of *GTA, Liberty City Stories*, will release in Europe on October 28th. Meanwhile, parent company Take 2 posted losses of $28.8m for its third quarter ending July 31st, while confirming controversial PS2 and Xbox title *Bully* has slipped into 2006. Sales were up six per cent at $169.9m thanks to the success of *Midnight Club 3* and *GTA San Andreas*.

Fresh air for Oxygen
Growing UK publisher Oxygen is embarking on a major drive to double its headcount over the next three months, MCV can reveal. As the firm prepares to expand its business into new araeas, appointments will be spread across marketing, sales, dev management and PR, moving away from outourcing to an internal focus.

Taxing matter for TIGA
TIGA is hosting a seminar to educate developers on the issue of tax credits. Entitled 'Maximising R&D Tax Credits', it will be held on Monday 26th September. The discussion will take place between 3pm-6pm at media lawyers SJ Berwin, 222 Grays Inn Road, London.

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Sgt Joe "Red" Hartsock - 101st Airborne

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- 4 week TV campaign across terrestrial and satellite channels
- 3 month specialist print campaign covering all format magazines
- 2 month specialist online campaign
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www.brothersinarmsgame.com

Trade

Launch will be supported with:
A3 posters; oversized boxes; dummy packaging; hanging banners; added value incentives

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"The most legitimate WWII game of all time"
XBOXWORLD

"Bigger and better than the first game"
PCZONE

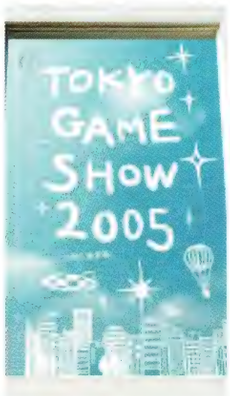
"If you liked the 1st game you'll love this one"
- sgt_george_luz (fan post on the Gearbox forum)

gearbox software

UBISOFT

NEWS

EVENT [GUIDE]



September 16th-18th
Tokyo Game Show
tgs.cesa.or.jp

September 19th-20th
Video Game Investor Conference
Hotel Nikko, San Francisco

October 4th-5th
X05
Amsterdam
Microsoft: 0118 909 4599

October 7-9th
Indie Games Conference, Eugene Oregon
www.indiegamescon.com

October 24th-25th
The LA Office Roadshow
Europe, London
www.laoffice.com

October 25th-26th
Brand Licensing Show
London
www.brandlicensingexpo.com

October 27th-28th
Austin Game Conference
www.gameconference.com

October 31st - November 1st
Serious Games Summit
Washington DC
www.seriousgames.org

January 5th-8th
2006 International CES
Las Vegas
www.cesweb.org

January 25th-28th 2006
ToyFair
ExCeL, London
www.toyfair.com

May 10th-12th
E3 2006
Los Angles
www.e3expo.com

From GT to WRC, Harrison pulls Sony studios together

Formation of SCE WWS gives Harrison charge of Japan, US and Europe hit squads

by Stuart Dinsey

AS IT PREPARES for the launch of PlayStation 3 sometime next year, Sony has given Phil Harrison the new task of co-ordinating all of the company's global games development strategy.

His five-year spell as executive vice president for development at Sony Computer Entertainment Europe has seen huge successes such as *EyeToy, SingStar, WRC* and *The Getaway.*

In his new role, he will retain responsibility for European output, but also take control of studios in North America and Japan – where the hit portfolio includes the likes of *Jak & Daxter, Ratchet & Clank, Gran Turismo* and *Everybody's Golf.*

His official job title is president of newly created division Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios (SCE WWS).

"I have been asked to take on a role that unifies the four parts of our product development organisation into a global strategy," Harrison explained to *MCV.*

"We are unique in the world, in that we have powerful development in each territory, each of which has developed million-selling global franchises. No one else has that depth of creative resource.

"We are going forward from a position of great strength," he added.

SCE Worldwide Studios: 020 7859 0000

ALL AROUND THE WORLD: Harrison secures new global studio role

> *"We are unique in the world in that we have powerful development in each territory."*
>
> ***Phil Harrison, SCE WWS***

CAMPAIGN OF THE WEEK

BET ON SOLDIER

Publisher: Digital Jesters **Format:** PC **Release Date:** Sept 16th

ONLINE: Digital Jesters is embarking on a three-month marketing campaign across several major websites to promote the futuristic shooter, and is also offering a free-to-play *Bet On Soldier* mini-game at minibetonsoldier.com, which also has downloadable ringtones and screen savers. At betonsoldier.com there is an online level design competition in conjunction with AMD, offering $10,000 in cash and prizes, and a series of gameplay and featurette trailers. Single- and multi-player demos are also available from the site.

TV: A sponsorship deal with all *Stargate* programmes on Sky will run from August to the end of October, and includes the new series which begins in October.

PRINT: An advertising campaign will accompany cover-mounted demo discs on specialist games magazines. *Nuts* magazine has given *Bet On Soldier* 4/5, and coverage is also planned in a range of specialist and mainstream magazines.

PR: Digital Jesters is committed to several key LAN events in the UK and US, and has already put in an appearance at EIEF and GME and plans to show its wares at the London MCM Expo in October. Point of sale material including A1 poster and sales booklets is also available.

Digital Jesters: 01707 871516

PLACE YOUR BETS: A broad online and print campaign backed by TV sponsorship will boost DJ's action title

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HIGH STREET UPDATE

POINT OF SALE

Konami: A2 posters and cubes back PSP titles *Coded Arms* and *Metal Gear Acid. Shaman King* and *Destiny Board Traveller* are supported with A2 posters, and *Yu-Gi-Oh* is promoted with A2 online posters and window stickers.

BVG: POS is coming soon for *The Chronicles of Narnia.*

Empire: *Hello Kitty Roller Rescue* is backed with A2 posters, standees and cubes.

Sega: *Spartan: Total Warrior* is supported with A2 posters and inlays. *Virtua Tennis* is promoted with posters, inlays, window clings, dummy boxes and counter display units. Inlays are backing *World Snooker Challenge 2005* whilst posters, standees, cubes and wobbler inlays are supporting *Super Monkey Ball Deluxe. Sonic Gems Collection* is promoted with inlays, whilst inlays are backing *Barbarian Invasion* on PC.

Take 2: Inlays are available for *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories. The Warriors* is backed with inlays and A2 posters, as is *Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition* on PSP.

Capcom: Sales sheets are supporting *Resident Evil 4* whilst posters and sales sheets are backing *The Nightmare Before Christmas.* Posters support *Beatdown* and inlays are backing *Darkstalkers Chronicles.*

Activision: Inlays are backing *Spider-Man 2, THUG 2: Remix* and *Untold Legends. X-Men Legends 2* and *Ultimate Spider-Man* are supported with A2 posters.

Eidos: *Total Overdose* is promoted with A2 posters, standees, cubes, sales sheets and DVD demos. A2 posters, standees, sale sheets and oversized boxes are backing *Conflict: Global Storm.*

CHANNEL GAMES

All of the merchandise listed is available from Channel Games. For further details, simply log on to its dedicated POS online store www.gamespos.com. For all your retail, merchandising and POS requirements, please call Danny Coe on 07813 672599, or email him on dcoe@channel-advantage.co.uk

PRICE CHECK WATFORD

GAME / STORE	Ridge Racer Sony PSP	THUG 2: Remix Activision PSP	Real World Golf In2Games PS2	Delta Force BHD Novalogic Xbox
GAME	£34.99	£39.99	£49.98	£29.99
gamestation	£34.99	£34.99	N/A	£29.99
HMV	£34.99	£37.99	N/A	£29.99
Virgin	£34.99	N/A	N/A	£29.99
WOOLWORTHS	N/A	£39.99	N/A	N/A
WHSmith	£34.99	£34.99	N/A	N/A

It's a shame that the new Gametrak title *Real World Golf* has so little retail support here. Indies, however, will be delighted to see *Ridge Racer* on PSP going out at RRP across the board. Prices for *THUG 2* on PSP are more varied, with some retailers selling above the standard £34.99 price point.

IN STORE PROMOTIONS

gamestation **PSP:** The PSP bundle priced at £199.99 offers the PSP Value Pack, which consists of Sony's new handheld, a pair of headphones, pouch, wrist strap, AC adapter, battery pack, demo disk cleaning cloth and 32mb memory stick. A free game from a selection including *WipEout Pure* and *Ridge Racer* is also included. On top of this there's an essentials pack which includes a screen protector, screen wipes, two UMD cases, a stand and a USB charging cable.

Currys **PSP:** The standard bundle offers a PSP Value Pack and a copy of *TOCA Race Driver 2* for £199.99. You can also grab a discounted memory stick in addition to the deal. The £249.99 bundle offers the Value Pack, a screen protector, and additional power pack that slots into the PSP's battery compartment and copies of *Archer Maclean's Mercury, Metal Gear Acid* and *Lumines.*

TOYS R US **PSP:** For £199.99 you'll grab the Value Pack, an additional Deluxe carry case and *Virtua Tennis* or *Spider-Man 2.* Step up to £229.99 and you'll get the Value Pack, an additional accessories pack including three UMD cases, a USB link cable, a cleaning cloth, screen protector and PSP wallet and *World Snooker Challenge 2005* and *WipEout Pure.* The biggest is £249.89 and offers the Value Pack, the Deluxe Travel Pack that includes an additional carry case, in-car adapter, two UMD cases, a cleaning cloth a pair of headphones, *Hitch* on UMD, *World Snooker Challenge* 2005 and *Ridge Racer.*

[TALKING SHOP]

Official PSP launch bodes well for future

THE LAST few days have proved incredibly busy for HMV staff, not least because of the launch of HMV Digital – HMV's new downloads service – and, of course, PSP, which has had the kind of impact everyone expected and hoped for.

HMV Digital opens up exciting new possibilities that will give our customers even greater choice in terms of how they wish to access and enjoy entertainment products in future. Naturally, we would very much hope that this will also include games releases, where there is a viable public demand and technical developments enable it.

> *We can add value to the ongoing development of the games market with Xbox 360 and PS3 to come.*

Sony has delivered an outstanding marketing and promotional campaign around the launch of PSP, and there can be few journalists and, more importantly, gamers that aren't aware of its release. I'm glad to say that HMV played a key role in this after Sony kindly awarded the official UK launch to our flagship Oxford Street store.

More than 500 people queued up for the midnight opening, with one eager customer waiting in line for more than 12 hours. It was worth it for him though, as, aside from being among the first to own and play with the device, his picture was extensively splashed across the nation's media after the launch.

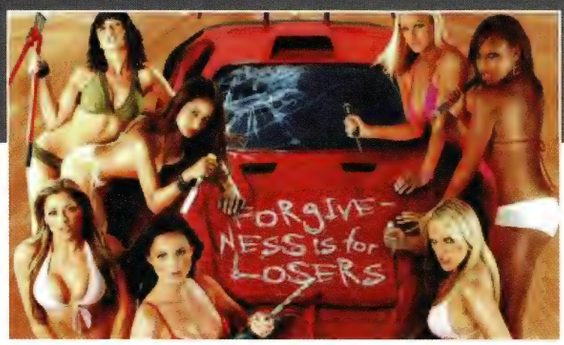
What I think this also shows, however, is that while we may not yet be the biggest games retailer in the UK and Ireland, we are certainly well placed to support games releases with the kind of marketing and PR expertise and in-store events that we have developed over many years for music and video launches.

As such, I feel we can add a great deal of value to the on-going development of the games market, particularly with the Xbox 360 and PS3 launches still to come.

Tim Ellis,
Head of Games,
HMV

BARBED WIRES

As ever, we've been keeping our ear to the ground, sifting through the relentless knob jokes and infantile grammar to bring you the hottest topics fuelling debate on the great World Wide Web...



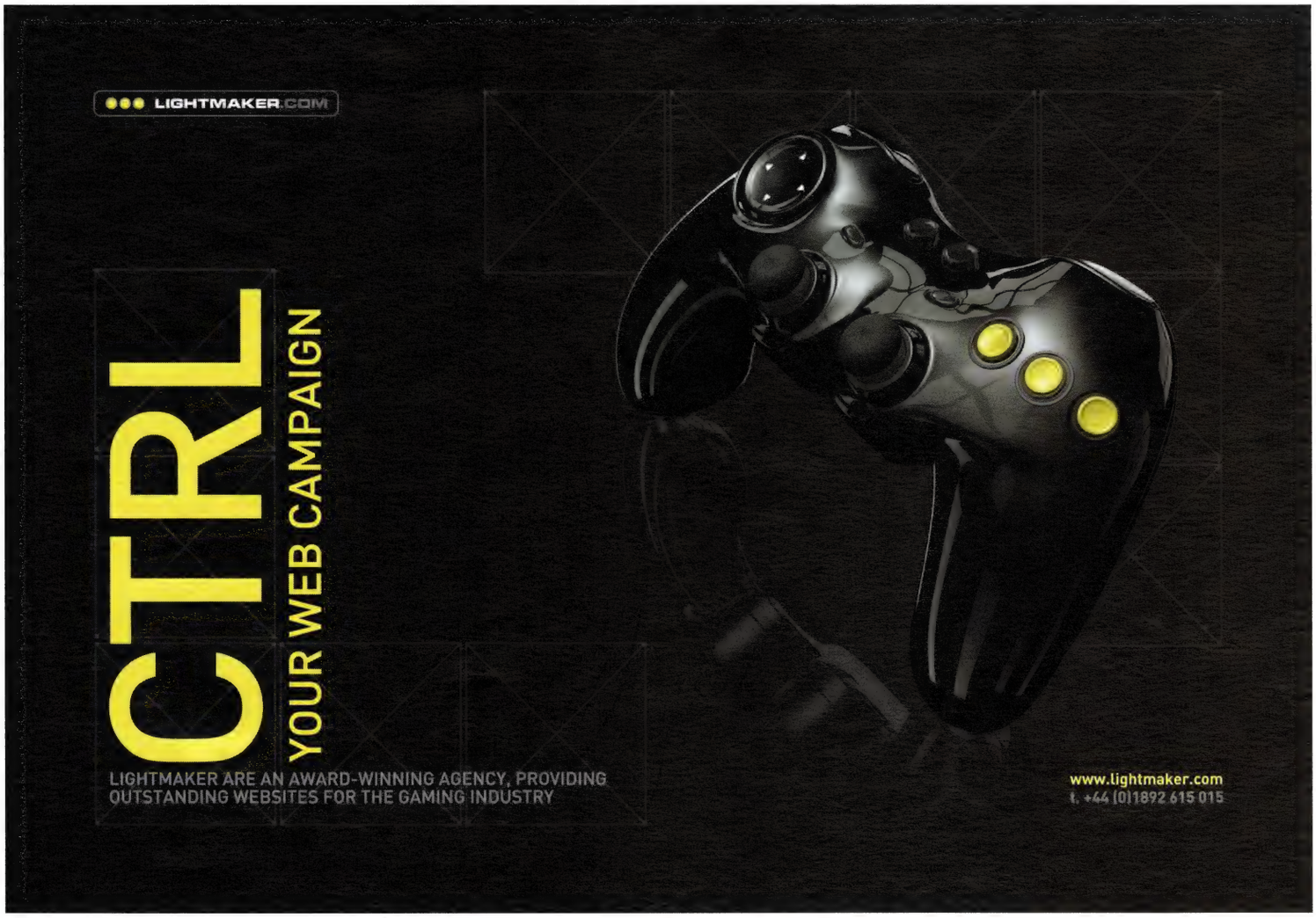
MOST OBVIOUS article of the week goes to **BBC News**, which reports that, shockingly, Microsoft will be making Xbox 360 "as difficult as possible to hack". Chris Satchell from the Xbox Advanced Technology Group does, however, add: "I'm sure sooner or later someone will work out how to circumvent security." Makes you wonder why you bother, eh Chris?

Eurogamer has a full preview of PSP's forthcoming attractions, in the process highlighting either battery life or loading times as potential drawbacks in every single game featured. The intellectual heavyweights in the forum debate the implications: "Sony helped introduce console load times with the PSOne and are now introducing load times to handhelds. They stink," says Spazmo. Sony will also be devastated to hear Kengro's views: "WTF.... If this is the best games that is coming for psp, i'll get a ds and *nintendogs* anyday... This realese (sic) list blows sony, consider the ds as ordered." Hard to argue with that.

Spong this week invited readers to: "Make jokes about ejaculating again with *Seaman 2*". The PS2 title is described as a sequel to "the really quite odd Dreamcast game in which you spoke to a fish-type thing," and is reported on without a single spunk-related pun. Shame on you, *Spong*.

On the subject of ejaculation, *Playboy* magazine has announced that it will run a second feature showing off female games characters in all their naked, rendered glory. Two glum forumites at **Edge Online** say that the whole matter is "another low point" and "a sad day" for the industry. But there is one salient point: "How long till the *Daily Mail* and its ilk see this and scream for all things games to be screwed up into tiny pieces and then burnt, stamped on, and finally defecated on by a passing hobo?"

Finally, EA's campaign for *Burnout Revenge (above)* has angered at least one girl gamer. The firm has taken "a hot iron and poked it in the eyes of female gamers everywhere, relying on the female form to sell a game that has little to do with it," says **Thumbbandits**. We print the picture, as the site puts it, "for your hardening pleasure".



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Multiplayer raises concerns as Verizon keeps it real

Developers fear 'bandwagon jumping' effect as real-time 3G tournament kicks-off

by Stuart O'Brien

DEVELOPERS have voiced concerns about the increasing number of mobile multi-player platforms they are being asked to support, questioning the sustainability of the sector.

Multiplayer gaming is certainly hotting up, with US operator Verizon Wireless kicking off the world's first real-time tournament on its 3G network and Internet giant Yahoo! outlining its own strategy for the sector.

But one developer told *MCV* there is often a lot of unhealthy bandwagon jumping and pressure to support mutliplayer technologies used by the larger operators in order to secure future distribution.

TEAM PLAYER: Asphalt GT is among first to offer live multiplayer action

Others have questioned how many multiplayer platforms operators are realistically able to integrate, and called for greater standardisation as opposed to each publisher bringing its own proprietary platform to the table.

Verizon has teamed with Gameloft to offer its V Cast multimedia subscribers a multi-player version of 3D racing game *Asphalt Urban GT*, which also holds the honour of being the first mobile game to be ported to Nintendo's DS

Yahoo!, meanwhile, has ruled out the funding of large third-party mobile games as it continues to extend its PC-based community and multi-player services into wireless.

While Yahoo! already publishes internally produced mobile titles for its multi-platform games service, the company sees itself more as a connected gaming enabler where third parties are concerned.

Speaking at the Game Developers Conference Europe in London, Yahoo!'s director of games operations John Cahill said the company is hoping to grab a slice of a mobile games market it expects to be worth $7 billion by 2008.

www.verizonwireless.com

Mario jumps into mobile

NINTENDO has unveiled a mobile wallpaper and ringtone offering for the Japanese market, heightening speculation that the console giant is planning to migrate some of its games titles to wireless.

October sees the launch of the Nintendo Mobile Yen210 subscription service on the i-mode service, with debuts to follow soon after on KDDI and Vodafone Japan.

Rumours have been circulating about Nintendo's mobile plans for some time, not least since local rivals such as Namco, Sega and Square Enix have made significant headway in the sector.

However, as a platform holder Nintendo already has a clutch of 'mobile' platforms at its disposal under the Game Boy moniker, and the jury is still out as to whether handheld and wireless gaming sectors are complementary or competitive to each other.

www.nintendo.com

Action needed on usability

MORE THAN ONE THIRD of mobile owners are not using data services due to a combination of product complexity and perceived high cost, according to results of a global usability survey.

The good news is that if these problems are addressed, 70 per cent of users said they would use applications such as news, games, weather info and sports scores at least two-to-five times a week, with subscription the preferred method of payment.

The survey, commissioned by mobile application platform provider Action Engine, found that of the 34 per cent of respondents not using data services, 46 per cent cited cost as the number one barrier to uptake, and 28 per cent named complexity.

Significantly, off-portal downloads were the most popular content delivery mechanism among those surveyed, rather than those sourced from the mobile portals or websites of their mobile operator.

Among other key findings from the survey, which included participants from North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia Pacific, were that 85 per cent of respondents wanted more personalisation from the apps they used and that 76 per cent would tolerate no more than two trips to the network while using an app.

www.actionengine.com

[IN BRIEF]

Building blocks
Danish games developer Kiloo has won the rights to create mobile products based on the Lego brand. It has signed a global deal (excluding Japan) with Giant for exclusive three-year rights for Lego games and three years' non-exclusive rights for wallpapers and themes. Kiloo aims to have two games - based on soccer and racing - plus themes and wallpapers available by the end of 2005.

Surf's up for PSP
Japanese mobile and Internet content delivery specialist Access announced that its NetFront mobile browser has been adopted by Sony for its PSP handheld. The move provides further evidence of crossover between the handheld console and mobile phone game sectors.

Birdie for Kayak
Kayak Interactive's European subsidiary Synergenix has unveiled *PMGA MiniGolf* - the first mobile game to be endorsed by the Professional Miniature Golf Association (PMGA) of the US. The game will be made available through the usual European and Asia Pacific network imminently, with North America later this year.

Onwards for India
Indiagames has selected Swedish middleware provider Terraplay to supply server solutions for its connected and multiplayer games offering. The publisher will launch several titles later this year using the recently launched MOVE 3.0 platform, which supports gamertags, high scores, tournaments, matchmaking, turn-based and realtime multiplayer.

Investors react
US mobile publisher Reaxion has closed $2 million in Series A financing with i-Hatch Ventures. Reaxion said the investment will enable it to deepen its product pipeline and expand distribution and marketing capabilities on a global basis. Reaxion's existing branded titles include Paramount's *The Longest Yard*, with original IP including *Minigolf 2*, *Mahjong Deluxe* and *Pro Curling*.

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MICROSOFT PLAYS THE PLATFORM GAME

With Xbox firmly established as a rock-solid gaming brand, Microsoft has at last turned its attentions to the declining Windows business. Backed by a massive Games For Windows marketing push, the Redmond giant might be a little late to the frontline, but its extensive battle plans to build a platform are well placed to boost the ailing sector...

BY JOHNNY MINKLEY

AFTER, by its own admission, 10 years of effectively neglecting to support PC as a gaming platform, Microsoft has launched a massive 18-month campaign to 'put the game back into Windows'.

On one level, Microsoft's previous lack of marketing support for Windows gaming seems short-sighted behaviour for a platform holder. Of all the formats where there is a pressing need for consumer guidance and simplification of messaging, surely it is the PC?

Any fool, even the most pig-headed of Luddites, could figure out how to play games on a PlayStation 2 with little guidance. But with PC, even if it's already set up in the home, there exists a Gordian knot of compatibility issues to unravel, the need to fork out for hardware upgrades to handle the latest games, the hassle of the installation process, and then having to track down patches to fix problematic code – what a complete nightmare.

But is it, really? No, of course not. And anyone familiar with PC gaming knows that, while these are issues peculiar to the platform, they are made very easy to resolve once you actually get down to it.

The problem thus far for the platform is that this is a very real, worryingly widespread perception of PC gaming, however. That it's just one big, life's-too-short, pain in the arse. Not exactly the biggest incentive in the world for third-party publishers disproportionately to hype PC products versus console SKUs, which can merrily hitchhike in on the relentless consumer messaging. So new users resolutely have not been getting down to it. And Microsoft is, in no small part, to blame.

Now all that is changing, the US firm allocating a massive spend to back Games For Windows, and establish it as a credible platform in the eyes of the consumer, leading up to the launch of its Vista operating system next year.

On the one hand it seems scarcely credible that a company of the size and ability of Microsoft would see one of its core businesses shrink over time – the Windows business is down 10 per cent year-on-year - and not move to turn the tide more quickly.

But the firm's significant aspirations in the gaming space are a relatively more recent development, and the onerous challenge of realising its Xbox dream has understandably been a huge focus of resources and of mind-share.

From a standing start, and faced with the sneering contempt of many in the trade and media, Microsoft has in four remarkable years established Xbox as the global number two home console brand, and is now preparing to make a significant head-start with the next-generation later this year.

That is a stunning achievement by any standards; but it has been won at a huge cost to the firm. And, as a result, only now is Microsoft in a position to attempt to do the same for PC gaming.

Timing-wise, the current Games For Windows initiative is ideal for a number of important reasons.

2005 is a 'banner year' for Microsoft Game Studios, according to the firm, with six major titles releasing over the period, spearheaded by the flagship *Age of Empires III* this November.

The launch of 360 will mark the dawn of a new era of cross-compatibility with Windows systems, fuelled by a dual-format game controller and a linked retail presence. And next year's launch of Vista, the new version of Windows, will see games fundamentally built-in to the infrastructure of the operating system for the first time.

> *Retail has already voiced its approval of Microsoft's renewed focus on PC, with the company offering extensive support to the sector to help drive sales of key titles.*

Microsoft wants to establish Windows as a platform perceived in the same terms as Xbox or PlayStation 2. The heavyweight 18-month global marketing blitz will help its cause enormously. And an awareness of games is fundamental to Vista, all installed titles grouped in a dedicated area, with publisher and developer info displayed, with automatic searching for updates and patches. Easy.

Safety and security are also paramount, with dedicated support for games ratings systems across the globe. So PEGI and BBFC ratings will be clearly displayed for UK users. And Microsoft has been working hard with the publishing community to ensure a range of 'best practice' initiatives are employed and observed, such as parental controls and easy install procedures.

This standardisation of the platform is essential if the sector is to grow. And publishers are responding to Microsoft's support in kind, with partners looking to redesign boxes so that Games For Windows branding mirrors that found on PS2 and Xbox SKUs, for example.

To address the shelf space issue, Microsoft has cleverly conjured a retail concept which puts 360 and Windows software alongside each other, supported by the Microsoft Universal Game Controller.

Retail has already voiced its approval of Microsoft's renewed focus on PC, with the company offering extensive support to the sector to help drive its key titles to commercial success and grow the business.

Millions of households already have a Windows PC; they may well use it regularly to surf the Internet. The trade has agonised for years over how to tap into a ready-made customer base of staggering proportions. But no real emotional or semantic connection between Windows and gaming in people's minds, compounded by the overwhelming marketing bias towards consoles, has frustratingly hamstrung efforts to a significant degree.

But now Microsoft has finally answered its wake up call, the full attention and substantial support of the Redmond giant looks set to reinvigorate PC gaming and provide the platform with genuine mass-market credibility. How very un-PC.

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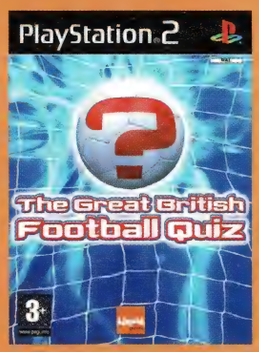

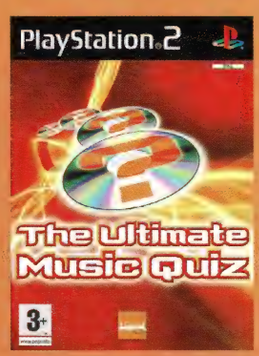

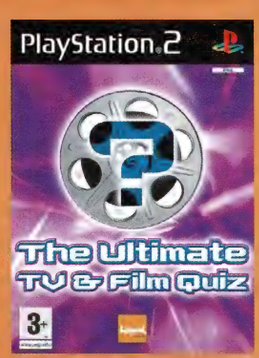

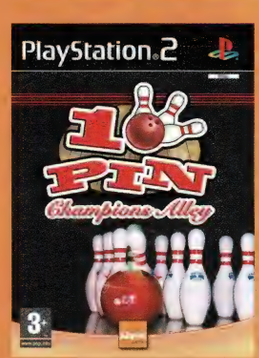

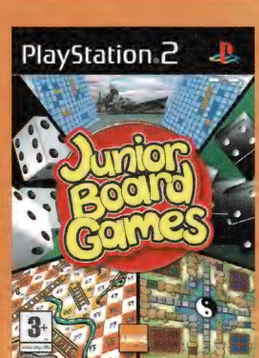

OPINION & ANALYSIS

[UMD MOVIES] **Peter Sleeman**

Opportunity knocks again for specialist games retailers

LAST YEAR on the flight back from holiday it seemed to me that the obvious thing to do was to buy a portable DVD player to occupy the kids. Indeed I half expected the flight to be full of them this year.

Only one was evident, watching the rather unsuitable *Flight of the Phoenix* where a band of ne'er do wells have to rebuild a plane that crashes in a remote desert - as we flew back over the Sahara from Egypt.

Now of course I have a PSP and the problem is completely solved. Even my wife is impressed with the screen and quality of the output.

Five hour flights no longer seem so daunting. Transatlantic trips beckon.

The battle begins of course. Who stocks the UMDs? Is it a film product that I go to my specialist DVD outlet for, or a games stockist who understands and sells the hardware? The initial experience is unclear. In the short-term it seems the generalist retailers have the edge as they carry both ranges so at least have the opportunity to redirect the mystified consumer.

For the film companies this is a fourth bite at the cherry as they follow-up box office with VHS, DVD and now UMD. How much will this cannibalise DVD sales no-one knows, but what it does do is give the games industry a chance to sell a range of products that will drive a new consumer into their grasp.

> *UMD could become a very tidy additional range for the retail sector that decides to own it. And that ownership to this mind is still very much up for grabs.*

Will consumers now wait for the UMD as it is smaller to store or will they buy DVDs for the extras and convenience of playing them at home. Or both?

That a new format brings new opportunities is a given, but PSP with its new disc format brings more than most, and will doubtless be followed by its competition. Nintendo has already shown its traditional foresight and originality with a range of games and hardware aimed at a whole new demographic. PSP has a chance to bring us a whole additional range suitable for these consumers.

The danger is the range of products that emerge is either too narrowly targeted at the traditional games consumer, or that the industry cannot hold the punter by making the products they need easy to find.

After a spring and summer devoid of much good news, at last opportunity knocks. UMD could become a very tidy additional range for the retail sector that decides to own it. That ownership to this mind is still very much up for grabs.

Peter Sleeman is managing director of Pinnacle Software

[MEDIA] **Colin Campbell**

The power of the written word

MURDOCH'S purchase of IGN has largely been seen in terms of News Corp's recently found anxiety/confidence about the growth of online as a media, news and advertising vehicle.

But IGN is, at its core, a specialist games publication. No company of News Corp's magnitude or reach has operated in this environment before. This is what's crucial.

Murdoch is attracted by IGN's audience of young males and his belief in specialist narrowband entertainment and information. Their interest in games is beside the point. But games are what is generating traffic as well as ad dollars. He wants to use this as the basis for an entertainment hub, based on a wide variety of specialist interests.

Here is a move away from catch-all media like TV and newspapers, to tightly defined media like websites, blogs and specialist press.

What's amazing is how much of IGN's success has come through the public's love of gaming. No other mass-market pastime generates quite as much devotion to information.

If this move is a nod towards gaming's extraordinary power to enrapture its audience, it also signals the point at which online has overtaken print and continues to marginalise TV as the dominant games information medium in the US and, eventually, Europe. Large US publishers, as recently as 18 months ago, were splitting specialist print and online budgets by a factor of about four to one in favour of print.

> *Specialist magazines are nothing if not tenacious. They'll still be here a decade hence.*

In the financial year ahead, some online budgets will be double those of print budgets.

For advertisers, specialist online media deliver hardcore and casual audiences. Unlike tired mainstream platforms (like men's mags or cable TV) it's subject specific and mainstream.

Online is in the ascendant. But the fact remains that hardcore consumers still buy magazines; and these remain an important conduit for much of the transfer of information and opinion in this business. ABCs are flat now, but as the next gen cycle comes on, hardcore print will return in terms of copy sales.

However, it's hard to see page counts back up to their PS2 heights of 2002 and 2003. In contrast, game publishers' budgets online will definitely increase.

Online has a range of growth catalysts to choose from ranging from technology issues, consumer behaviour and investment.

Nevertheless, specialist magazines are nothing if not tenacious. They'll still be here a decade hence. The biggest loser will be TV, thus Murdoch's obsession.

Colin Campbell is editor-in-chief of US website next-gen.biz

OPINION & ANALYSIS

[PC GAMES] Garry Williams

Alive and kicking

THE SILLY SEASON is upon us, if the recent *MCV* is anything to go by. The numpties are out in force again, sounding the death knell for PC gaming. It's a tired, pointless spectator event that we have to endure on a regular basis, the Winter Olympics of our industry – everything's supposed to be going downhill, and a lot faster than you think.

But when it comes to the PC sector, the truth is somewhat different. You simply cannot ignore the fact that well over a third of all UK homes have a PC - evidence of more than a decade of continued growth in this sector. Not convinced? Check out *Half Life* and *Sims 2* going in at £39.99 on the PC and then ask yourself whether you could add £10 to the retail price of your top non-PC titles and still shift units.

Yes, ELSPA's figures on the UK market show PC dropping from £258 million turnover to £233 million during 2000-2003, but that is the whole leisure market. As other companies deserted PC gaming the cannier blue chip EA stayed firmly in the sector and spent a good two years dominating those charts and churning very pleasing revenues.

Where would those big console earners of *San Andreas, Splinter Cell, Halo,* and *Doom* have been without their PC heritage? With estimated development budgets on next-gen consoles of up to $12 million expect quite a few publishers returning swiftly to the more manageable risk to reward structure offered in PC gaming.

Don't peddle your stories of PC gloom to the likes of Nvidia which, when it releases a new driver, gets 38 million downloads (Intel figures need to go on top of this). Even if you take into account that there have been fewer destination PC titles on the market in the last year – because publishers abandoned the steady growth of PC for the revenue rollercoaster ride of console - the PC games market still grew a healthy five per cent (ChartTrack Aug 2004-July 2005).

Next-gen console structures mean that publishers can create PC SKUs at the same time rather than be forced into an either/or choice. ChartTrack figures from July this year back to August last year show the overall gaming market grew nine per cent. Great. But PC full price shot up 12 per cent.

A clear message that, in a transition year for consoles, you can't afford to ignore this sector.

> *"You cannot ignore the fact that over a third of UK homes have a PC - evidence of over a decade of continued growth."*

Garry Williams is business development director of the Mastertronic Group

[LICENCES] Simon Byron

This sporting life

SO FREDDY'LL get Sports Personality of the Year, Kevin'll score a lucrative hair dye deal and Michael Vaughan will become Michael Knight for a new generation.

Congratulations, of course, go to the England team for an astonishing Ashes victory. But it's not just sports fans applauding: the industry, too, has been enjoying an equally extraordinary sporting success.

With hindsight – and the Ashes safely tucked in the back pocket – it's not surprising. But a few eyebrows were raised a few weeks back when Codemasters scored an unexpected number one from a franchise celebrating a decade at the stumps. Right game, right name, right time – even EA, usually impossible to beat in a straight sporting contest, was caught out. Literally.

Codemasters took a gamble – one more outlandish than the fools who backed England to win at 3/1 prior to the start of the series. Had we collapsed like in Tests gone by, there's no doubt *Lara* would have languished in the lower regions of the chart, with senior execs' faces as red as the title's P&L.

As this summer of sport games has proved – at the time of writing, motor racing, snooker, tennis and football ride high in the charts – we're not as inactive as the media would suggest, particularly when we're sat on our arses at home playing computer games. We like sports we're good at in real-life. The question is: what'll be next?

For those with initiative, there's are a couple of sports licences which have the potential to appeal. The most obvious would be Twenty20 Cricket – a form of the game speeded up to appeal to those without the attention span to follow five-day Tests. It's almost as if it's been developed with games in mind, with rules designed specifically to make it fast-moving and exciting. And it's so simple, even girls will understand it. Particular if you can dress your players up, too. Imagine!

Likewise the new A1 Grand Prix which screeches off on September 25th at Brands Hatch. It is Formula One with genuine, real-life speed boosts – it could only be more of a real-life video game if it boasted mushroom pick-ups or outlandish jumps. Whilst there's no guarantee it'll be the next big thing, it has the potential to tap into a Formula One fan-base disillusioned with uncompetitive cars and constant rule-changing.

But one sport whose value has plummeted over recent weeks is Aussie Rules Football. Because they don't do that. Nor certainly at cricket. How's that, losers?

Simon Byron is a director of Barrington Harvey PR

[FEEDBACK]

Do you think EA moving its Euro HQ to Geneva is a blow to the UK industry?

"I suspect EA's move to Geneva has more to do with tax than anything else, so while it won't effect UK publishing in any way, it will give those that move over to Geneva a chance to fill up their Swiss bank accounts. For any other publisher to move and for it to be worthwhile they would have to be big enough to do it."
Matt Carroll, Country Director, BVG

"There must be a good commercial reason for it, so if there are really decent financial incentives to go over there perhaps other bigger US firms will start to go too. The way the industry has changed over the last few years means that things have got far less UK-centric, so perhaps people in France and Germany would rather deal with someone in Switzerland than the UK, because it's more neutral and might be better suited for the European markets."
Andy Payne, Mastertronic, MD

"The UK remains the unquestionable heartland of Europe when it comes to creativity in gaming, but continental Europe's share is bound to grow extensively in the upcoming years. Taking this change into consideration is a priority for all the 'players' if they want to maximize the potential of their games across the existing and emerging markets."
Alberic Guigou, Chief Marketing Officer, Hip

"The UK is certainly declining as the focal point for Europe, if you look at the closure of development studios and the collapse of the trade shows in recent years, as well as the growing popularity of European shows like Liepzig. The industry is certainly moving toward mainland Europe. Central European markets are growing all the time and represent greater overall potential."
Nikolay Baryshnikov, International Sales Director, 1C

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THE MCV INTERVIEW

DAVID YARNTON GENERAL MANAGER NINTENDO UK

AustralianRules

Nintendo UK boss David Yarnton is a man with a vision. Unfased by the threat of PSP, the ebullient Aussie is committed to growing the market with a four-platform assault and focus on innovation. **Johnny Minkley** reports...

'THE NINTENDO DIFFERENCE': a slogan employed by the Japanese giant in recent years to differentiate itself from the Microsofts and the Sonys; to reaffirm its unflinching commitment to innovation and fun, at a remove from the increasingly generic and blinkered focus of other publishers.

At the time, the reasoning was sound enough. Unfortunately for Nintendo, GameCube, bluntly, was not strong enough to carry this message to the size of audience the firm anticipated. And ideas were faulty – like the ill-fated focus on 'connectivity'.

At E3 in 2003 the company, astonishingly, looked forlorn, bruised, lacking direction.

But in 2005 Nintendo has rediscovered its mojo. And while the slogan has long disappeared from the marketing spiel, it has more genuine resonance right now than ever before. The necessary ideas and content are in place, and already driving stellar success.

DS has proved a turning point in the illustrious history of Nintendo. For all the (thoroughly well deserved) posturing of SCEE following PSP's record-breaking Euro

> *"The media attention our industry has received since the arrival of PSP and DS is unprecedented. I believe there is room for both platforms."*

launch, the fact remains that DS is, at the moment, kicking its ass in Japan and has been since launch.

But what defines Nintendo in 2005 is not a ferocious appetite for competition, rather a passionate commitment to growing the games market for the good of all, spearheaded by its innovative DS handheld.

"If you look at Japan over the past two years, the market has been shrinking – because people have been leaving gaming," suggests Nintendo UK boss David Yarnton.

"If the three format holders were all just competing for the same small chunk of the market, it would just be a massacre of discounting and spending huge amounts of money. Unless we start looking outside our sector, we'll still just be a small business."

Nothing better underlines this message than *Nintendogs*. Billed as the 'new *Pokemon*', Shigeru Miyamoto's pet simulator has already become a phenomenon in its own right in Japan, with European success sure to follow when it releases on October 7th.

> *If you do the same old thing all the time, you're going to get the same old people. We want to grow the market.*

"How is the market going to grow if it doesn't change and innovate?" Yarnton stresses. "With *Nintendogs*, you could not play that game on another system. If you do the same old thing all the time, you're going to get the same old people. We want to grow the market."

This differentiation will be reflected in Nintendo's Q4 marketing drive, its 'broadest ever', where GameCube, GBA SP, Game Boy Micro and DS form a four-pronged assault on multiple demographics, expanding the reach of the firm's systems into unchartered territory.

Yarnton backs this up with an anecdote about Nintendo president Satoru Iwata. "Mr Iwata said that he took home *Brain Training* for DS and his dad pinched it. If that works, if we're getting more females, older people, lapsed gamers - whether it's five per cent, 10 per cent - it's a success. It's growing the business and the market."

The concept of 'lapsed' gamer requires further explication. "It's a combination of things," Yarnton contests. "People have a lot more pressure on their time as they get older and get married, get a job, have a family. If the games they used to like are still just the same, they get bored. What's new to attract them?

"People might say: 'But look at how many Marios you've done'. But if you look at *Mario Smash Football* on GameCube, you can see that the character has evolved and developed."

Smash Football is now Nintendo UK's big 'Cube title for Christmas, with a bundle to boot. Yet the firm's plans were dealt a severe blow with the delay of *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* into 2006. What was to be the star of the last major Christmas push for its home console has now given retail, already struggling to find space for the new formats, more reason to pull 'Cube from stores.

"Shelf space is a battle, not just because of *Zelda* slipping, but because of us launching a new format, and other new hardware like PSP and 360," Yarnton concedes. "We were worried about the retail reaction to *Zelda*, but it's been understanding. People would rather us get the game right."

But Nintendo's focus is handheld. The company is bullishly predicting 50 per cent year-on-year growth in the sector by year-end – handheld sales are already up a massive 91 per cent year-on-year to date. And on November 4th, the Game Boy family welcomes its latest arrival, the sassy Micro.

While the marketeers characterise Micro's image as one of 'fashion and portability', repositioning SP as 'entry level', retail has been left puzzled by the decision to price both at £69.99.

Yarnton defends this, but refuses to rule out an SP cut pre-Christmas. "I cannot categorically say we won't do that. Our pricing strategies are something we need to keep confidential."

With three separate handheld platforms to deal with, you'd think the arrival of PSP was the last thing Nintendo needed. And SCEE hasn't been shy in branding DS a 'gimmick' without the legs for the long-haul. But for Yarnton, the arrival of Sony's handheld is actually something to be welcomed.

"How much media attention has our industry had since we came in with DS and they started talking about PSP?" he queries. "It's unprecedented – this year's been fantastic. I believe there is room for both of us."

And that, for Yarnton and for Nintendo, is the difference that counts.

WAY TO GROW

MCV highlights the key products Nintendo hopes will expand the market this Q4...

Nintendogs - October 7th
A massive marketing push will deliver Nintendo's flagship DS title to Europe next month. Success is guaranteed.

Pink and Blue DS Hardware - Oct 7th
Two new shades arrive to celebrate the arrival of the pet-simulator.

Game Boy Micro - November 4th
The smallest Game Boy ever is Nintendo's lifestyle product for the season. The device will retail for £69.99

Mario Kart DS - November 11th
The much-loved racing series returns to launch Nintendo online gaming service.

Mario Smash Football GameCube Bundle - November 18th
In the absence of Zelda, Mario kicks off Nintendo's Christmas 'Cube drive.

SUMMER SIZZLER

Nintendo's Q4 push comes on the back of a highly successful nationwide summer sampling programme. A series of high-profile events, spearheaded by the Nintendo All Stars 2005 and DS Touch Me tours, have shown off the firm's wares throughout August and September, from Eastbourne to Edinburgh.

The campaign had already targeted 50,000 consumers by its half-way point and continues until September 25th, having taken in the likes of V Festival, Max Power Live and Guilfest along the way.

INDIE SPOTLIGHT

Independents' Day

It's not all doom and gloom in the indie sector, and as **Ben Parfitt** finds out, many are thriving...

FOR SOME INDIES, the growth of the games industry has proved a great opportunity to expand their businesses in ways they never could have dreamed when they started out. For others, it feels as if the industry that they once knew and loved has turned its back on them.

"The industry has become much more mainstream," says Total Games director Mark Jeffreys, whose company now owns six stores. "The large retailers entering the industry are the biggest change retail has ever gone through."

As if this increased competition were not enough, the games sector is also going through that turbulent time of watching one hardware cycle draw to a close. "Over the last 15 years we have been through the product cycle three times and it is always very painful," states G Force MD Neil Tait. "Margins that were once 30 per cent have withered away and 10 per cent is increasingly now the norm."

However, the problems indies currently face should not be as big a problem if they plan ahead and are prepared to adjust their business to suit market conditions. Whilst many are struggling, there are also several out there who continue to flourish.

If indies want to succeed there are some things they will have to accept. "We just can't sell any amount of new games anymore," explains Third Place owner Matt Allan, who has just opened his second store near Portsmouth. "We used to be able to shift 100 copies. Now it's more like 15."

"Yes, the margins have got smaller for new releases," adds Total Games' Jeffreys. "Live with it. Rather than not selling new releases like some whinging brat who can't get his own way, stock them and make what you can."

Whilst indies cannot compete on prices for new titles, it's much easier to be competitive in the pre-owned scene. "The margin on second-hand games is very healthy compared with new stock and is undeniably the only way to ensure success," adds Graham Golden, head of games for X Electrical. Third Place's Allan agrees: "Sure, you can't compete with multiples on new releases but two weeks after release, when second-hand copies start to come in, suddenly you'll be the cheapest place in town."

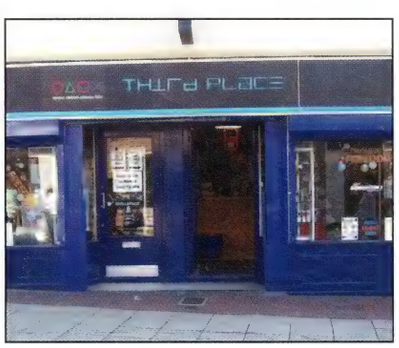
> *Rather than not selling new releases like some whinging brat, stock them and make what you can.*
>
> ***Mark Jeffreys, Total Games***

However, the extent to which indies can distinguish themselves from multiples goes way beyond second-hand software. "We have a huge range of pre-owned and retro software spanning from the late 1970s through to current generations," X Electrical's Golden continues. "We stock DVDs as well. The market for entertainment products is merging and the people who buy games are the same people who buy MP3 players and expensive mobile phones."

It seems that the more variety an indie has, the broader the customer base it will be able to attract. "We stock a wide range of toys, movie-related action figures, board games, cards and DVDs to mention but a few," explains Jeffreys. "All of them contribute a decent chunk to our turnover as they provide a better margin than the conventional gaming items."

Getting customers into the store is not enough – indies need to make sure that they come back. "We have a database system where we'll track down any game that customers request," says Gary Noakes, head of Game Player. "We also have a membership system and we offer a free cheat request service."

It will be those who understand the industry and prepare accordingly that will flourish. "It won't get easier in the short term," agrees Third Place's Allan. "But there will be a place on the High Street for indies, just maybe not as many of us as there are now."



Game Player and Third Place have flourished because of the lucrative second-hand market

RENTAL SERVICES

It's so important that indies offer services that High Street chains do not. What better way to do this than through rental, argues Game4Game's Kev Taylor: "Rental charges for console games should be set at £2.50 a night for all new titles, reducing down to £1 as a game ages. You'll have already recouped your money from the purchase and made plenty of profit.

"Promote buying second-hand games from customers as the condition isn't so important for rental. Also add a sale price on rentals balanced between RRP, the amount of times rented and the condition of the disc.

"The secret is only to buy in one or two copies of any title and to stick to the best. Use new titles to bring customers in. Also, think of something like a 99p Day where all rentals are reduced for 24 hours."

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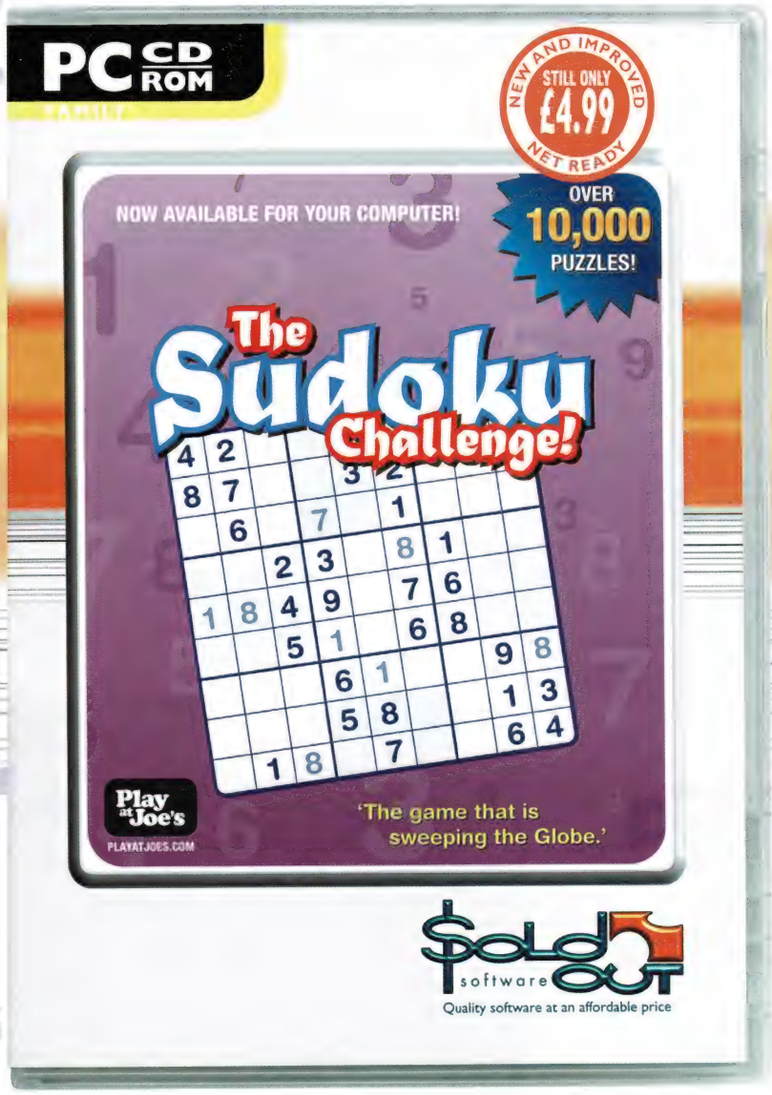

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PERSONNEL

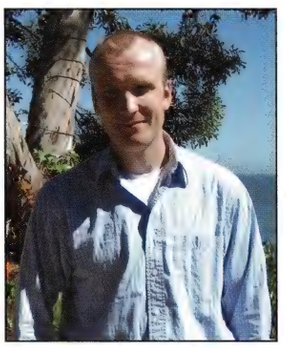
Climax reaches new heights

Another set of major appointments at the developer this week, as Macrovision hires a new executive VP, Activision adds Allen, Glu appoints another big name and EA and Gamer.tv re-shuffle...

CLIMAX ■ The developer's relentless expansion continues unabated this week as **ERIK GLOERSON** heads up a raft of new talent at the LA studio. Gloerson *(pictured right)* is appointed as new LA studio head, and has an 18-year history in the games industry. After founding FunCom in 1993, he has occupied senior positions at Looking Glass Studios, Infogrames, EA and most recently Turbine. Also in the US, **BRIAN DREYER** has been appointed as VP of business development, moving from development agent and consultancy firm DNA, which he founded. A new creative team also bolsters the LA operations. **VANESSA MILES** is an experienced lead artist, and moves from EA having worked on *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* and *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*. **JEREMY PARKER** moves from Treyarch where he worked on several *Spider-Man* titles, and becomes lead designer. **MATT SOPHOS** also joins Parker on the design team, moving from EA where he worked on several *Medal of Honor* titles. Meanwhile on this side of the Atlantic, **LOU FAWCETT** *(pictured right)* joins as VP of business development Europe, having held senior positions at Atari and Hasbro.

MACROVISION ■ The mobile games company has appointed **JAMES BUDGE** as executive vice president and chief financial officer. Budge has worked at Trados, Sendmail and Crossworlds prior to joining Macrovision.

ACTIVISION ■ **MARK ALLEN** has joined the publisher as PR manager. Allen has already started at Activision's Slough offices,



Climax has appointed Erik Gloerson as the new studio head in sunny LA

Lou Fawcett joins Climax as vice president of business development Europe

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having moved from a similar role at Eidos.

GLU ■ The mobile gaming company has further expanded its ranks after the appointment of Chris Meredith from Majesco Europe. **KIRSTY MILNE** has joined as director of accounts management following seven years at Eidos, where she most recently served as UK managing director.

EA ■ The shock departure of two senior executives within EA's development studios has resulted in **DAVID GARDNER** moving into the role of studio chief operating officer. After the departure of worldwide studios president Don Mattrick and executive vice president Bruce McMillan a few weeks ago, Mattrick will be replaced by **V. PAUL LEE**, formerly EA's chief operating officer.

GAMER.TV ■ Following Chris Noone's departure to pursue other interests in Australia, **IAN SHARPE** has been promoted to head of visual magic and business development. **BARN CLEAVE** has also moved into the position of business development manager for broadband and mobile, replacing Jackie Plumridge.

UBISOFT ■ **MIKE MASUKU** has joined the publisher as strategic sales and marketing executive, and will report to head of strategic sales and licensing, Charlie Barrett. Masuku joins from Geoff Howe Marketing Communications, where he looked after the Nintendo and Samsung accounts.

10TACLE ■ The German publisher has taken on **NICK PORSCHE** to head up localisation and quality assurance. Porsche began his career in games at Infogrames and moved on to Effective Media and Jowood's QA department before most recently founding Localab in 2004.

GAME OF LIFE

PHIL HARRISON

Phil Harrison started a new job this week - pulling together a global strategy for Sony development. It's a long way from helping Tansoft publish *Insect Insanity* on the Oric 1 at just 15, or even Mindscape, which he joined in 1989 under Geoff Heath. Since 1992, when Harrison become the first Sony games exec based outside Japan, he has been everything from PlayStation evangelist to head of third party and R&D in the US. Called back to Europe in 2000, he has since presided over the success of *EyeToy, SingStar, WRC* and *The Getaway* amongst others.

FACTFILE

Job title: President, Worldwide Studios
Company: Sony Computer Entertainment
Home: Chalfont St.Giles, Bucks
Car: BMW X5
First Love: *Pac-Man*
Most Wanted: *SingStar*

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MCV's product guide covers everything a store needs to keep ahead of the game. This week, Eidos is kicking up a Global Storm...

RETAILONLY

Conflict: Global Storm **Publisher:** Eidos **Release Date:** September 30th **Format:** PS2, Xbox, PC

Eidos gives gamers the chance to take on global terrorist organisation March 33 in the publisher's explosive new squad-based war game *Conflict: Global Storm*

41

RECOMMENDED

This week MCV takes a look at Black & White 2, Advance Wars DS, Myst V, Conflict: Global Storm, Driv3r and World Rally Championship

40

ON THE RADAR

MCV selects the finest forthcoming releases

41

NEW RELEASES

A comprehensive guide to all coming attractions

44

REVIEW CODE

The critics' views on the biggest releases

45

MARGIN MAKER

Make the most of your in-store offering

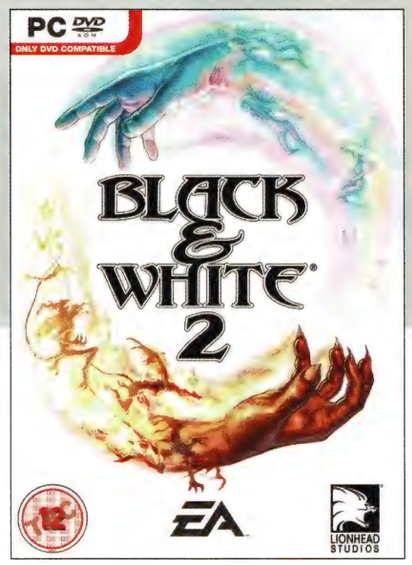
46

BLACK & WHITE SHOWS TRUE COLOURS

Divine intervention won't be required to shift Molyneux's latest God-game extravaganza...

BLACK & WHITE 2 *PC*

ELECTRONIC ARTS



STREET DATE: ..... October 7th
STREET PRICE: £34.99
DISTRIBUTOR: ..... Pinnacle
CONTACT: 01932 450 000

When *Black & White* first hit shelves in 2001 many gamers didn't quite know what to make of it. Aside from villager–scaring, resource management and controlling huge monsters, *Black & White* was one of the first games to feature truly open-ended gameplay.

This sequel offers much of the same whilst massively expanding on those original ideas. The creatures now have more strategic importance, leading armies into battle in the midst of some truly epic conflicts. As the huge recent success of *Fable* proves, with Peter Molyneux at the helm, you know to expect the unexpected.

ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE *DS*

Nintendo

STREET DATE: ..... September 30th
STREET PRICE: £34.99
DISTRIBUTOR: ..... Open
CONTACT: 01932 895 390

Advance Wars, or *Famicon Wars* as it is known in Japan, has enjoyed massive popularity in Nintendo's homeland for a long time. It was only when the series hit the GBA in the West that gamers on this side of the globe were able to appreciate its subtleties.

Leaving the GBA behind, the series is about to make its DS debut with the third instalment, *Dual Strike*. Along with intuitive touch screen controls, the added RPG elements give an extra tactical depth. Strong past incarnations and user friendly gameplay mean that DS owners will be battling to get their hands on Nintendo's latest.

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[ON THE RADAR]

Looking beyond the current release schedule to highlight the biggest blockbusters further down the line...

BROTHERS IN ARMS 2
UBISOFT
XBOX/PC
Shooting and tactical awareness combine once more as Ubisoft looks to build upon the foundations of the first title for this sequel.
OCTOBER 7th

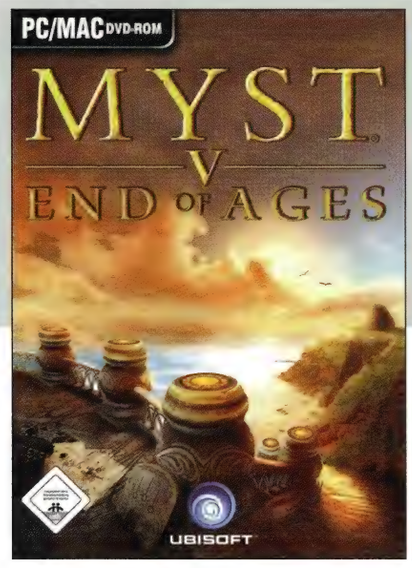
GEIST
NINTENDO
GC
A combination of first person shooting and puzzle solving serve to offer GameCube owners something wholly different to the genre's usual formula.
OCTOBER 7th

GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE
ATARI
PS2/XBOX/PSP
Grafitti has featured in games before, but this title is the first to have the urban art as its main focus.
OCTOBER 14th

T.H.U.G AMERICAN WASTELAND
ACTIVISION
PS2/XBOX/GC/360
Tony Hawk's simply does not give up. The enduring series keeps up the pace with the latest annual offering this October.
OCTOBER 28th

MYST V: END OF AGES *PC*

UBISOFT



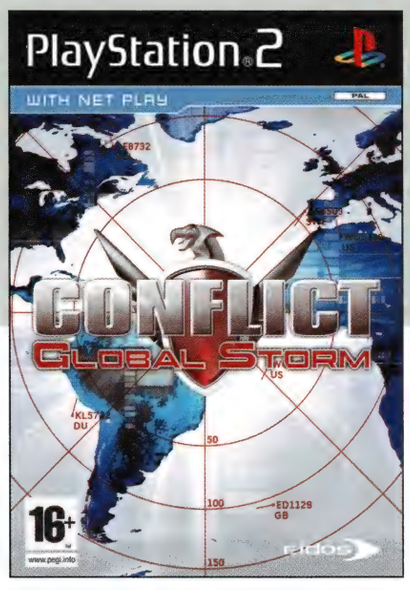
STREET DATE: ..... September 30th
STREET PRICE: £29.99
DISTRIBUTOR: ..... Pinnacle
CONTACT: 01923 838 230

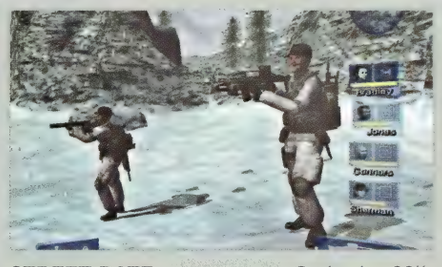
Myst may be the very antithesis of fun gaming to adrenaline junkies, but thanks to its in-depth puzzles, beautifully rendered visuals and more leisurely pace, the *Myst* series enjoys the sort of loyal following that many leading franchises can only dream of.

With *Myst V* set to be the final chapter, it's only fitting that such an epic franchise should be brought to a close in a grandoise manner. Along with the usual lush environments and point-and-click interface, an innovative new 'slate' system allows you to alter your environment and communicate with bizarre creatures.

CONFLICT: GLOBAL STORM *PS2, Xbox, PC*

EIDOS INTERACTIVE





STREET DATE: ..... September 30th
STREET PRICE: .. £39.99 console, £29.99 PC
DISTRIBUTOR: ..... Centresoft
CONTACT: 0121 625 3906

The *Conflict* series has been a long running success for SCi, with its previous incarnations set during Desert Storm and Vietnam racking up solid sales. This latest title is set in the near future and places the gamer in the midst of a worldwide battle against terrorist group March 33.

The heroes of *Conflict: Desert Storm* return in this new incarnation to kick some terrorist arse, with Eidos promising an overhauled game engine, superior enemy AI, more varied gameplay and an online mode to expand on the series' appeal. This array of new features will have *Conflict* fans moving out into retail to snap this one up.

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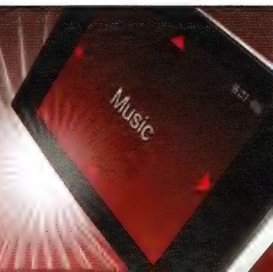

[ON THE RADAR]

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT 2
LUCASARTS
PS2/XBOX/PC
One of the best *Star Wars* titles in recent times returns, the sequel features playable Jedi. It is your destiny...
OCTOBER 28th

RESIDENT EVIL 4
CAPCOM
PS2
It amazed on GameCube, and now PS2 owners finally get their chance to grab arguably the finest title in the series to date.
NOVEMBER 4th

THE PATH OF NEO
ATARI
PS2/XBOX/PC
Enter the Matrix left a sour taste in the mouth, but Atari is determined to make amends with this follow up, which looks very promising.
NOVEMBER 11th

POKEMON XD
NINTENDO
GC
The first full *Pokémon* RPG to skip handheld and head staight for console. Make sure you're stocked up on 'Cubes for this one.
NOVEMBER 18th

DRIV3R *GBA*

ATARI

STREET DATE: ..... September 30th
STREET PRICE: £29.99

DISTRIBUTOR: ..... Advantage
CONTACT: 020 8222 9700

Atari's three million–selling *Driv3r* will finally be making its debut on GBA on September 30th, having been developed specifically for Nintendo's handheld by the talented makers of previous GBA titles *Stuntman* and *V-Rally 3*, G. Dubail and F. Velez.

It's certainly an ambitious title, with 25 missions spread across Miami and Nice as well as a plethora of driving mini games including Slalom, Checkpoint, Trailblazer and Destruction. With over 25 vehicles, a range of weapons and a variety of secret missions to unlock, it seems Atari has crammed a good deal of content into a wee GBA cartridge.

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP *PSP*

SONY

STREET DATE: ..... October
STREET PRICE: £34.99

DISTRIBUTOR: ..... Centresoft
CONTACT: 020 7911 8152

It may well be a diversion from its normal route, but the news that Traveller's Tales is handling the PSP conversion of *World Rally Championship* will certainly add to the growing anticipation for Sony's rally franchise. With such a quality pedigree, *WRC* on PSP is sure to impress.

As well as being the first handheld game to feature the full FIA rally licence, the title also boasts 16 official rallies from around the world including the likes of Japan and Mexico. Exclusive downloadable content is also promised at a later stage, and wireless multiplayer will accomodate an impressive eight players. One to watch.

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PlayStation.2 XBOX PC CD ROM

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SONY GETS RETAIL MOVING

EyeToy Kinetic arrives in stores next week to whip retail into shape in time for the peak season...

[MUST STOCK]

EYETOY KINETIC

RELEASED: 23/9/2005
FORMAT: PSP
DISTRIBUTOR: PINNACLE
CONTACT: 01923 450 000

EVER NOTICE that your non-gaming mates seem to pull a lot more women than you? That's because they often indulge in a process known as 'exercise', which stops them getting all fat and greasy.

The main drawback with exercise, other than actually having to move your body around, is that to do it you normally have to leave the house and go outside. That's the large, expansive area beyond the front door.

Whilst games such as *Dance Dance Revolution* already include the need for physical exertion, *Kinetic* is constructed entirely around the concept.

Whilst *Kinetic* will obviously not appeal to your more stereotypical gamer, it will appeal to many who might not normally dabble in gaming. And with the likes of this and *Nintendogs* on the horizon, gaming truly is at long last expanding its reach.

TITLE	FORMAT	GENRE	PUBLISHER	TELEPHONE	DISTRIBUTOR	RELEASED
Heroes of the Pacific	PS2/Xbox/PC	Flight Sim	Codemasters	01926 814132	Centresoft	September 23rd
Dragonshard	PC	Action/Adventure	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	September 23rd
Madden NFL 2006	PC	Sports	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	September 23rd
Burnout: Revenge	PS2/Xbox	Racing	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	September 23rd
Top Spin	PS2	Sports	Take 2	01753 496 613	Gem	September 23rd
Trainz 2006	PC	Train sim	Just Trains	01480 462 748	Gem	September 23rd
EyeToy: Kinetic	PS2	Fitness	Sony	020 7911 8152	Centresoft	September 23rd
Everybody's Golf	PS2	Sport	Sony	020 7911 8152	Centresoft	September 23rd
Kuon	PS2	Action/Adventure	Digital Jesters	01707 871516	Pinnacle	September 23rd
Rally Manager	PC	Racing	GMX	020 8309 3600	Pinnacle	September 23rd
System Rush	N-Gage	Racing	Nokia	07973 333 553	Gem	September 23rd
Neuro Hunter	PC	FPS RPG	Deep Silver	0870 0270985	Koch	September 23rd
Sniper Elite	PS2/Xbox/PC	Stealth	Ubisoft	01923 838230	Pinnacle	September 23rd
Dynasty Warriors 5	Xbox	Action/Strategy	Koei	01462 476130	Open	September 23rd
Evil Dead Regeneration	PS2/Xbox/PC	Action	THQ	01483 767 656	Advantage	September 23rd
Myst V: End of Ages	PC/Mac	Graphic Adventure	Ubisoft	01923 838230	Pinnacle	September 23rd
ER: The Game	PC	Strategy	Mindscape	01923 582 640	Mindscape	September 23rd
American Chopper	PS2/Xbox/PC	Racing	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	September 23rd
Fable: The Lost Chapters	PC	RPG	Microsoft	0870 6010100	Gem	September 23rd
Madden NFL 2006	DS	Sports	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	September 30th
Advance Wars DS	DS	Strategy	Nintendo	01932 895390	Open	September 30th
Atari Masterpieces Vol 1	N-Gage	Retro	Nokia	07973 333 553	Gem	September 30th
S.L.A.I	PS2	Action/Adventure	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open	September 30th
Mortal Kombat: Shaolin Monks	PS2/Xbox	Fighting	Midway	0207 382 7720	Pinnacle	September 30th
Driv3r	GBA	Racing	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	September 30th
One Piece: Grand Battle	PS2	Adventure	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	September 30th
NBA Live '06	PS2/Xbox/GC/PC	Sports	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	September 30th
The Nightmare Before Xmas	PS2/Xbox	Action/Adventure	Capcom	020 8222 1000	Open	September 30th
Beatdown: Fists of Vengeance	PS2/Xbox	Action	Capcom	020 8846 2880	Open	September 30th
Disney's Cinderella: Magical Dreams	GBA	Platform	THQ	01483 767 656	Advantage	September 30th
Ed, Edd 'n Eddy	GBA	Kids'	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	September 30th
FIFA 06	PS2/Xbox/GC/PC/GBA	Sports	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	September 30th
Conflict: Global Storm	PS2/Xbox/PC	RTS	Eidos	0121 625 3906	Centresoft	September 30th
Far Cry Instincts	Xbox	FPS	Ubisoft	01923 838230	Pinnacle	September 30th
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Lockdown	GC	FPS	Ubisoft	01923 838230	Pinnacle	September 30th
Pippa Funnel	GBA	Adventure	Ubisoft	01923 838230	Pinnacle	September 30th
Rome: Total War - Barbarian Invasion	PC	Strategy	Sega	020 8995 3399	Gem	September 30th
Sonic Gems	PS2/GC	Platform	Sega	020 8995 3399	Gem	September 30th
Ghost in the Shell	PSP	FPS	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	September
Rugby Challenge 2006	PS2/Xbox/PC	Sports	Hip	020 7808 7097	Open	September
Dungeon Siege 2	PC	RPG	Microsoft	0870 6010100	Gem	September
World Poker Tour	PS2/Xbox/PC/PSP	Poker Sim	Take 2	01753 496 613	Gem	September
Street Racing Syndicate	GBA	Racing	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	September
Monster Quest	GBA	Action/Adventure	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	September
Swords of Destiny	PS2	Action/Adventure	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	September
Power Rangers - SPD	PS2/GBA	Action/Adventure	BVG	020 8222 1413	CentreSoft	September
Garfield 2: Saving Arlene	PS2/PC	Action	Hip	020 7808 7097	Open	September
Dungeon Lords	PC	Strategy	Legacy Interactive	01293 582 630	Mindscape	September
Meteos	DS	Puzzle	Nintendo	01932 895390	Pinnacle	September
America's Army: Rise of a Soldier	PS2/Xbox	FPS	Ubisoft	01923 838230	Pinnacle	Q3
Star Wars Episode III Revenge of the Sith	PSP	Action/Adventure	Ubisoft	01923 838230	Pinnacle	Q3
Title Bout Championship Boxing	PC	Sports	Fusion Software	01933 682 007	Pinnacle	October 7th
Taxi 3: Extreme Rush	PC	Racing	Fusion Software	01933 682 007	Pinnacle	October 7th
Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney	DS	Strategy	Capcom	020 8846 2250	Open	October 7th
FIFA 06	DS	Sports	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 7th

[FORMAT HIGHLIGHTS]

The biggest releases from the schedule on individual formats

Burnout: Revenge
EA/September 23rd
Spartan: Total Warrior
Sega/October 7th

Far Cry Instincts
Ubisoft/September 30th
Mortal Kombat: Shaolin Monks
Midway/September 30th

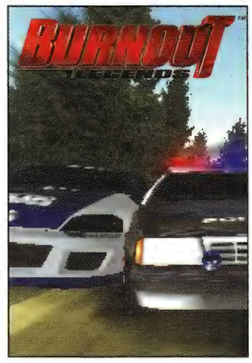
Ghost in the Shell
Atari/September
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith
Ubisoft/Q3

Advance Wars
Nintendo/September 30th
Meteos
Nintendo/September
Nintendogs
Nintendo/October 7th

Armoured Core: Nexus	PS2	Action/Adventure	Digital Jesters	01707 871516	Pinnacle	October 7th
Kingdom Under Fire: Heroes	Xbox	Action	Deep Silver	0870 0270985	Koch	October 7th
Total Club Manager 2006	PC	Sports	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 7th
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	GBA	Platformer	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	October 7th
Nintendogs	DS	Pet Sim	Nintendo	01932 895390	Open	October 7th
UFO Aftershock	PC	Action/Adventure	Cenega	01923 838230	Pinnacle	October 7th
Witch	GBA	Action/Adventure	BVG	020 8222 1413	CentreSoft	October 7th
Brothers In Arms: Earned in Blood	Xbox/PC	RTS	Ubisoft	01923 838230	Pinnacle	October 7th
Shattered Union	Xbox/PC	Strategy	Take 2	01753 496 613	Gem	October 7th
Black and White 2	PC	Strategy	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 7th
Darkwatch	PS2/Xbox	FPS	Ubisoft	01923 838230	Pinnacle	October 7th
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2006	PS2/Xbox/GC/PC/PSP	Sports	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 7th
Vietcong 2	PC	Strategy	Take 2	01753 496 613	Gem	October 7th
The Nightmare Before Xmas	GBA	Action/Adventure	BVG	020 8222 1413	CentreSoft	October 7th
Spartan: Total Warrior	PS2/Xbox/GC	Strategy	Sega	020 8995 3399	Gem	October 7th
Geist	GC	FPS	Nintendo	01932 895390	Open	October 7th
Heart of Empire: ROME	PC	God Sim	Deep Silver	0870 0270985	Koch	October 14th
Stuart Little Big Photo Adventure	PS2	Action	Sony	020 7911 8152	Centresoft	October 14th
Bratz: Rock Angelz	PS2/GC/PC/GBA	Platform	THQ	01483 767 656	Advantage	October 14th
SpyToy	PS2	EyeToy	Sony	020 7911 8152	Centresoft	October 14th
Train Driver	PC	Train sim	Just Trains	01480 462 748	Gem	October 14th
Blitzkrieg II	PC	RTS	CDV	0870 0270985	Koch	October 14th
WRC Rally Evolution	PS2	Racing	Sony	020 7911 8152	Centresoft	October 14th
NASCAR 06: Total Team Control	PS2/Xbox	Racing	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 14th
The Suffering: Ties that Bind	PS2/Xbox/PC	Action/Horror	Midway	020 7382 7720	Pinnacle	October 14th
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	PS2/Xbox/GBA	Shooting	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	October 14th
Dead to Rights 2	PS2	Action	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 14th
Ultimate Spider-Man	PS2/Xbox/GC/DS/GBA/PC	Action/Adventure	Activision	01753 756100	Centresoft	October 14th
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	PS2/Xbox/GC/PSP/PC	Action RPG	Activision	01753 756100	Centresoft	October 14th
TMNT: Mutant Melee	PS2	Action	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open	October 14th
Wallace and Gromit: Were-Rabbit	PS2/Xbox	Action	Konami	020 8987 5730	Open	October 14th
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	PS2/Xbox/GC/PSP	Action/Adventure	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 14th
Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure	PS2/Xbox/PC	Action/Adventure	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	October 14th
Serious Sam 2	PC/Xbox	FPS	Take 2	01753 496 613	Gem	October 14th
GeneSys	PS2/PC	FPS	Deep Silver	0870 0270985	Koch	October 21st
Duel Masters: Shadow of the Code	GBA	Action	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	October 21st
The X Factor	PS2/PC	Singing	Black Bean	020 8309 3710	Pinnacle	October 21st
Genji	PS2	Action/Adventure	Sony	020 7911 8152	Centresoft	October 21st
X3: The Reunion	PC	Action/Adventure	Deep Silver	0870 0270985	Koch	October 21st
LA Rush	PS2/Xbox/PC	Racing	Midway	020 7382 7720	Pinnacle	October 21st
Pokémon Emerald	GBA	Action/Adventure	Nintendo	01932 895390	Open	October 21st
Madden NFL 2006	PSP	Sports	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 21st
Namco Museum Battle Collection	PSP	Retro	Sony	020 7911 8152	Centresoft	October 21st
Dead to Rights 2	Xbox	Action	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 21st
Dragonball Z Budokai: Tenkaichi	PS2	Action	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	October 21st
FIFA 06	PSP	Sports	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 21st
Starship Troopers	PC	FPS	Empire	020 8343 7337	Open	October 28th
LMA Manager 2006	PS2/Xbox	Football	Codemasters	01926 814132	Centresoft	October 28th
Xenosaga Episode II	PS2	Action/Adventure	Sony	020 7911 8152	Centresoft	October 28th
Big Mutha Truckers	GBA/DS	Racing	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	October 28th
Kao Challengers	PSP	Action	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	October 28th
Makai Kingdom	PS2	Action/Strategy	Koei	01462 476130	Open	October 28th
European Jet Fighters	PC	Flight Sim	GMX	020 8309 3600	Pinnacle	October 28th
Without Warning	PS2/Xbox	Action Shooter	Capcom	020 8846 2880	Open	October 28th
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	DS	Action/Adventure	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	October 28th

[REVIEWS]

THE GAMES MAGS' VIEWS ON THE LATEST RELEASES



BURNOUT LEGENDS

Criterion crams all the manic enjoyment of its console forbearers into the tiny confines of Sony's PSP

RELEASED: SEPT 16TH
PLAY 10/10
PSW 9/10

SONIC GEMS COLLECTION

Much to the fans' delight, this collection picks up on a couple of titles cruelly missing from the Mega Collection

RELEASED: SEPT 30TH
PLAY 85%
IGN 7.5/10

THQ HAMMERS THE COMPETITION

A Warhammer threesome from the publisher will be assaulting the budget charts next week...

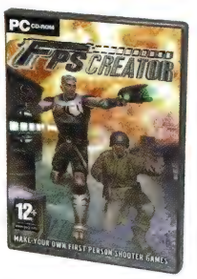
TITLE	FORMAT	GENRE	PUBLISHER	TELEPHONE	DISTRIBUTOR	RELEASED
Asteroids/Pong/Yars' Revenge	GBA	Retro	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	September 23rd
Devil May Cry 3	PS2	Action/Adventure	Capcom	020 8846 2250	Open	September 23rd
Flying Squadron	PS2	Flight	Phoenix	+31 40 3681044	Open	September 23rd
Cartoon World	PS2	Kids'	Phoenix	+31 40 3681044	Open	September 23rd
The Ultimate Music Quiz	PS2	Quiz	Liquid Games	01933 442 660	Centresoft	September 23rd
The Ultimate TV & Movie Quiz	PS2	Quiz	Liquid Games	01933 442 660	Centresoft	September 23rd
The Ultimate Sports Quiz	PS2	Quiz	Liquid Games	01933 442 660	Centresoft	September 23rd
Deus Ex: Invisible War	PC	FPS	PC Gamer Presents	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September 23rd
Warhammer 40,000: Winter Assault	PC	RTS	THQ	01483 767 656	Advantage	September 23rd
Warhammer 40,000: Game of the Year	PC	RTS	THQ	01483 767 656	Advantage	September 23rd
Warhammer 40,000: Gold Edition	PC	RTS	THQ	01483 767 656	Advantage	September 23rd
Championship Manager 03/04	PC	Management	PC Gamer Presents	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September 23rd
Care Bears	GBA	Action/Adventure	Game Factory	020 8309 3600	Pinnacle	September 23rd
World Championship Snooker 2005	PC	FPS	M.A.D	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September 23rd
Kiddies Party Pack	PS2	Kids'	Phoenix	+31 40 3681044	Open	September 23rd
City Soccer Challenge	PS2	Sports	Phoenix	+31 40 3681044	Open	September 23rd
Wet 'n Wild	PS2	Sports	Phoenix	+31 40 3681044	Open	September 23rd
International Cue Club 2	PS2	Sport	Midas	01279 858 000	Open	September 23rd
Truck Racing 2	PS2	Racing	Midas	01279 858 000	Open	September 23rd
Hitman: Contracts	PC	Action/Adventure	M.A.D	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September 23rd
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	PS2/Xbox/GC	Action/Adventure	Ubisoft	01923 838230	Pinnacle	September 23rd
Victorious Boxers 2	PS2	Sport	Empire	020 8343 7337	Open	September 23rd
Chicken Shoot	GBA	Platformer	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	September 23rd
Midway's Arcade Treasures 3	PS2/Xbox	Retro	Midway	020 7382 7720	Pinnacle	September 30th
Dragonball Z Budokai	PS2	Action/Adventure	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	September 30th
Neverwinter Nights Deluxe	PC	RPG	Atari	020 8222 9700	Advantage	September 30th
Extreme 4x4	Xbox	Racing	GMX	020 8309 3600	Pinnacle	September 30th
Apache Gunship	PS2	Flight	GMX	020 8309 3600	Pinnacle	September 30th
B17: The Legend Returns	PC	Flight	GMX	020 8309 3600	Pinnacle	September 30th
Counter Strike: Source	PC	FPS	EA	01932 450000	Pinnacle	September 30th
Samurai Jack	GBA	Action	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	September 30th
WWTBAM Junior	GBA	Quiz	Zoo Digital	0114 2413700	Open	September 30th
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	PC	RPG	Sold Out	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September
Commandos 3	PC	Strategy	Sold Out	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September
Conflict Desert Storm 2	PC	Tactical Shooter	Sold Out	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September
Republic	PC	RTS	Sold Out	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September
Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness	PC	Action/Adventure	Sold Out	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September
Emperor	PC	Strategy	Sold Out	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September
FarCry	PC	FPS	PC Gamer Presents	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September
Hitman: Contracts	PC	Action/Adventure	MAD	0845 234 4242	Mastertronic	September
Barbie Super Pack	GBA	Action	VU Games	0121 625 3908	Centresoft	September
Dodgeball	PS2	Sport	505 GameStreet	07712 762 726	PDQ/Advantage	September
Demolition Girl	PS2	Arcade	505 GameStreet	07712 762 726	PDQ/Advantage	September
Street Boyz	PS2	Fighting	505 GameStreet	07712 762 726	PDQ/Advantage	September
Air Raid 3	PS2	Flight	Phoenix	+31 40 3681044	Open	October 7th
Cartoon Kingdom	PS2	Kids'	Phoenix	+31 40 3681044	Open	October 7th
Snow Town	PS2	Sport	Phoenix	+31 40 3681044	Open	October 7th
Postman Pat	GBA/PC	Kids'	Game Factory	020 8309 3600	Pinnacle	October 14th
Movie Stars 5 Pack	PC	Action/Adventure	Disney Interactive	020 8222 1413	Open	October 14th
Taito Legends	PS2/Xbox/PC	Retro	Xplosiv	020 8343 7337	Open	October 14th
WWII: Tank Battles	PS2	Action	Midas	01279 858 000	Open	October 14th
WWII: Soldier	PS2	Action	Midas	01279 858 000	Open	October 14th
WWII: Battle Over Europe	PS2	Action	Midas	01279 858 000	Open	October 14th
Urban Skateboarder	PS2	Sport	Phoenix	+31 40 3681044	Open	October 21st

MARGIN MAKER

MCV's guide to the latest profit spinners...

FPS Creator

RELEASED: September 22nd
FORMAT: PC
DISTRIBUTOR: Connect
CONTACT: 01922 649868



THERE WAS a time when folks aspiring to work in the games industry would begin their quest huddled over their computers in the corner of the bedroom in an effort to program the next big hit.

Today's big budget releases may mean that such days are behind us, but that's not to say that the lone programmer is incapable of knocking out decent games software.

For those bewildered by modding and the more complex side of 3D modelling and programming, The Game Creators may have the perfect solution.

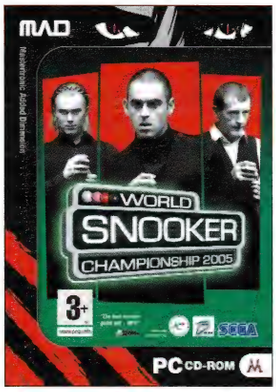
FPS Creator enables the easy production of FPS titles whilst eliminating the need for 3D modelling knowledge. And once the project is finished, it can be burnt onto CD and distributed amongst friends and even used for multiplayer LAN gaming. An impressive package and one that's sure to appeal to anyone who fancies a crack at game design.

MAD

PC GAMER PRESENTS

PC Games

THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE



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GAMECUBE [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		**RESIDENT EVIL 4** DEVELOPER: CAPCOM PUBLISHER: CAPCOM	
2	1	KILLER 7	CAPCOM
3	NEW	INCREDIBLE HULK: DESTRUCTION	VU GAMES
4	5	STAR FOX ASSAULT	NINTENDO
5	6	MARIO POWER TENNIS	NINTENDO
6	3	MARIO PARTY 6	NINTENDO
7	4	CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY	TAKE 2
8	7	POKÉMON COLOSSEUM	NINTENDO
9	8	DONKEY KONGA	NINTENDO
10	12	NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2	EA

NINTENDO DS [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		**SUPER MARIO 64** DEVELOPER: NINTENDO PUBLISHER: NINTENDO	
2	2	MADAGASCAR	ACTIVISION
3	4	BOMBERMAN DS	UBISOFT
4	5	NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2	EA
5	3	WARIOWARE TOUCHED!	NINTENDO
6	7	STAR WARS III: REVENGE OF THE SITH	LUCASARTS
7	9	ZOO KEEPER	IGNITION
8	12	POKÉMON DASH	NINTENDO
9	14	ANIMANIACS: LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION	IGNITION
10	8	THE URBZ: SIMS IN THE CITY	EA

PSP [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		**RIDGE RACER** DEVELOPER: NAMCO PUBLISHER: SONY	
2	3	VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR	SEGA
3	2	WIPEOUT PURE	SONY
4	5	NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND: RIVALS	EA
5	7	MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION	ROCKSTAR
6	11	EVERYBODY'S GOLF	SONY
7	9	WORLD TOUR SOCCER	SONY
8	4	METAL GEAR AC!D	KONAMI
9	NEW	CODED ARMS	KONAMI
10	10	LUMINES	UBISOFT

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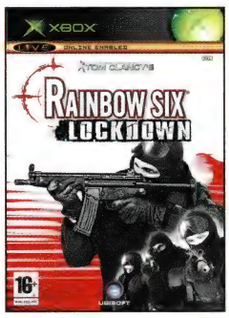

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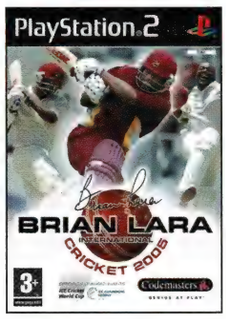

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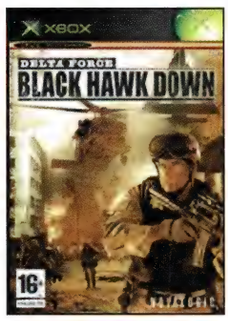

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[ENTERTAINMENT - FULL PRICE]

TOP 40 ALL

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		**TOM CLANCY'S: LOCKDOWN** FORMAT: PS2, XBOX DEVELOPER: RED STORM PUBLISHER: UBISOFT	
2	2	BRIAN LARA CRICKET 2005 PS2, XBOX, PC	CODEMASTERS
3	15	DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK XBOX	NOVALOGIC
4	1	RIDGE RACER PSP	SONY
5	NEW	INCREDIBLE HULK: DESTRUCTION PS2, XBOX, GC	VU GAMES
6	4	VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR PSP	SEGA
7	7	MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION PSP	ROCKSTAR
8	3	WIPEOUT PURE PSP	SONY
9	6	NFSU: RIVALS PSP	EA
10	25	SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE PS2, XBOX	SEGA
11	17	MADAGASCAR PS2, XBOX, GC, PC, GBA, DS	ACTIVISION
12	10	SPIDER-MAN 2 PSP, PS2, GBA	ACTIVISION
13	13	EVERYBODY'S GOLF PSP	SONY
14	11	WORLD TOUR SOCCER PSP	SONY
15	8	TOCA RACE DRIVER 2 PSP	CODEMASTERS
16	5	METAL GEAR AC!D PSP	KONAMI
17	38	GAMETRAK - REAL WORLD GOLF PSP	IN2GAMES
18	31	CHARLIE: CHOCOLATE FACTORY PS2, XBOX, PC, GBA	TAKE 2
19	NEW	CODED ARMS PSP	KONAMI
20	20	CRICKET 2005 PS2, XBOX, PC	EA

PLAYSTATION 2 [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		**BRIAN LARA CRICKET 2005** DEVELOPER: SWORDFISH STUDIOS PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS	
2	NEW	INCREDIBLE HULK: DESTRUCTION	VU GAMES
3	6	GAMETRAK - REAL WORLD GOLF	IN2GAMES
4	13	DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN	NOVALOGIC
5	11	SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE	SEGA
6	3	CRICKET 2005	EA
7	2	MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT	EA
8	8	MADAGASCAR	ACTIVISION
9	4	LEGO STAR WARS	EIDOS/GIANT
10	10	CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY	TAKE 2

[ANALYSIS]

After the high of last week following the launch of the PSP, the market comes down to earth with a bump, with unit sales falling 28 per cent and value down 30 per cent. Ubisoft claims number one with the fourth instalment of tactical FPS *Tom Clancy's Rainbox Six: Lockdown*, pushing Sony/Namco's *Ridge Racer* on PSP down to four. However, Ubi's Xbox and PS2 title actually achieved the lowest number of sales for an All Formats chart topper since Codemasters' *TOCA Race Driver 2* back in 2004, with 76 per cent of *Lockdown* sales coming from the Xbox game.

And, second week in, PSP software sales dip 60 per cent (units) and 58 per cent (value).

Samantha Loveday

FORMATS

[SOURCE] ChartTrack | elspa

Highest New Entry ■ Highest Top 40 Climber

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
21	21	**LEGO STAR WARS** PS2, XBOX, PC, GBA	EIDOS/GIANT
22	30	**PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4** PS2, XBOX	KONAMI
23	12	**LUMINES** PSP	UBISOFT
24	37	**GTA: SAN ANDREAS** PS2, XBOX, PC	ROCKSTAR
25	26	**FANTASTIC FOUR** PS2, XBOX, GC, GBA	ACTIVISION
26	19	**MOH: EUROPEAN ASSAULT** PS2, XBOX, GC	EA
27	33	**DUNGEON SIEGE II** PSP	MICROSOFT
28	9	**TONY HAWK'S 2: REMIX** PSP	ACTIVISION
29	32	**SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY** PS2, XBOX, PC, DS	UBISOFT
30	28	**SONIC 3D** PC	XPLOSIV
31	14	**UNTOLD LEGENDS: BLADE** PSP	ACTIVISION
32	23	**JUICED** PS2, XBOX, PC	THQ
33	NEW	**MOTO GP: TECHNOLOGY 3** XBOX, PC	THQ
34	NEW	**COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005** PS2, XBOX, PC, PSP	CODEMASTERS
35	16	**MEDIEVIL RESURRECTION** PSP	SONY
36	RE	**THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN** PS2, XBOX, PC	VU GAMES
37	18	**ARCHER MACLEAN'S MERCURY** PSP	IGNITION
38	RE	**STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT** PS2, XBOX	LUCASARTS
39	27	**TOM CLANCY'S: SUMMIT STRIKE** XBOX	UBISOFT
40	RE	**THE INCREDIBLES** PS2, GBA, GC	THQ

PC CD-ROM [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1	1	**DUNGEON SIEGE II** DEVELOPER: MICROSOFT PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT	
2	2	**BATTLEFIELD 2**	EA
3	4	**SIMS 2**	EA
4	12	**EARTH 2160**	KOCH
5	6	**GUILD WARS**	NCSOFT EUROPE
6	7	**HALF-LIFE 2**	VU GAMES
7	3	**FOOTBALL MANAGER 2005**	SEGA
8	5	**THE SIMS 2: UNIVERSITY**	EA
9	11	**WORLD OF WARCRAFT**	VU GAMES
10	9	**LOTR: BATTLE FOR MIDDLE EARTH**	EA

PC CD-ROM [BUDGET PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1	1	**SONIC 3D** DEVELOPER: SONIC TEAM PUBLISHER: XPLOSIV	
2	6	**SIM CITY 3000: UK EDITION**	SOLD OUT
3	4	**THE SIMS**	EA
4	5	**ICC: ASHES 05**	XPLOSIV
5	7	**CSI: CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION**	FOCUS
6	11	**COMMAND & CONQUER: TIBERIAN SUN**	SOLD OUT
7	8	**MOH: PACIFIC ASSAULT**	EA
8	10	**THEME HOSPITAL**	SOLD OUT
9	13	**BLACK & WHITE**	SOLD OUT
10	9	**COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT 2**	SOLD OUT

XBOX [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1	1	**TOM CLANCY'S: LOCKDOWN** DEVELOPER: RED STORM PUBLISHER: UBISOFT	
2	1	**DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN**	NOVALOGIC
3	4	**MOTO GP: RACING TECHNOLOGY 3**	THQ
4	NEW	**INCREDIBLE HULK: DESTRUCTION**	VU GAMES
5	5	**SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE**	SEGA
6	2	**BRIAN LARA CRICKET 2005**	CODEMASTERS
7	4	**GTA: SAN ANDREAS**	ROCKSTAR
8	8	**JUICED**	THQ
9	11	**FORZA MOTORSPORT**	MICROSOFT
10	14	**HALO 2**	MICROSOFT

PLAYSTATION 2 [BUDGET PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1	1	**PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4** DEVELOPER: KONAMI PUBLISHER: KONAMI	
2	2	**THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN**	VU GAMES
3	3	**STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT**	LUCASARTS
4	4	**RATCHET & CLANK 3**	SONY
5	NEW	**BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN**	EA
6	5	**SPONGEBOB: FLYING DUTCHMAN**	THQ
7	NEW	**TOM CLANCY'S: CHAOS THEORY**	UBISOFT
8	7	**KILLZONE**	SONY
9	14	**SONIC MEGA COLLECTION PLUS**	SEGA
10	6	**SINGSTAR POPWORLD**	SONY

THAT WAS THEN

[12 YEARS AGO]

1.	*STRIKER*, SN	ELITE
2.	*JUNGLESTRIKE*, MD	EA
3.	*MICRO MACHINES*, NI, MD	CODEMASTERS
4.	*JURASSIC PARK*, MD	SEGA
5.	*SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2*, MD, SG, GG	SEGA
6.	*SUPER KICK OFF*, GA, GG, MD, SG, SN, NI	VARIOUS
7.	*LEMMINGS*, GA, GG, MD, SG, SN, NI	VARIOUS
8.	*BUBSY THE BOBCAT*, MD	ACCOLADE
9.	*PGA TOUR GOLF 2*, MD	EA
10.	*ALIEN 3*, GA, GG, MD, SG, SN, NI	VARIOUS

[7 YEARS AGO]

1.	*TEKKEN 3*, PSONE	NAMCO
2.	*TOCA TOURING CAR*, PSONE, PC	CODEMASTERS
3.	*COLIN MCRAE RALLY*, PSONE	CODEMASTERS
4.	*ISS '98*, N64	KONAMI
5.	*GRAN TURISMO*, PSONE	SCEE
6.	*PREMIER MANAGER '98*, PSONE, PC	GREMLIN
7.	*WORLD CUP '98*, PL, PC, N64 GA	EA/THQ
8.	*TOMB RAIDER 2*, PSONE, PC	EIDOS
9.	*WWF: WARZONE*, PL, SA, PC	ACCLAIM
10.	*TOMB RAIDER*, N64	NINTENDO

[3 YEARS AGO]

1.	*STUNTMAN*, PS2	INFOGRAMES
2.	*TUROX EVOLUTION*, PS2, XBOX, GBA	ACCLAIM
3.	*GRAND THEFT AUTO 3*, PS2	TAKE 2
4.	*MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR*, PC	ACTIVISION
5.	*TOCA RACE DRIVER*, PS2	CODEMASTERS
6.	*MAFIA*, PC	TAKE 2
7.	*TONY HAWK'S: SKATER 3*, PS2, XBOX, PC, GBC	ACTIVISION
8.	*MOH: FRONTLINE*, PS2	EA
9.	*COMMANDOS 2: MEN OF COURAGE*, PS2	EIDOS
10.	*SPIDER-MAN*, PS2, XBOX, GBA, GC	ACTIVISION

RETAIL ONLY CHARTS

INDIE CHARTS

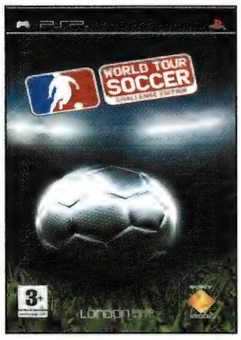
[ENTERTAINMENT - FULL PRICE]

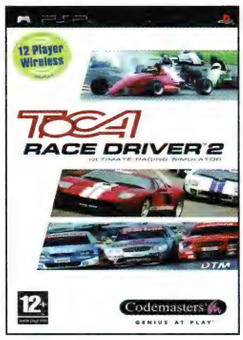
ALL FORMATS

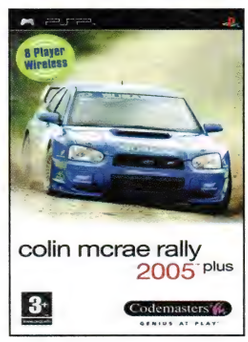
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/FORMAT	PUBLISHER	CHART TRACK
1		**RIDGE RACER** FORMAT: PSP DEVELOPER: NAMCO PUBLISHER: SONY		
2	4	WORLD TOUR SOCCER PSP	SONY	
3	11	TOCA RACE DRIVER 2 PSP	CODEMASTERS	
4	2	WIPEOUT PURE PSP	SONY	
5	NEW	COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005 PSP	CODEMASTERS	
6	18	SPIDER-MAN 2 PSP	ACTIVISION	
7	NEW	TOM CLANCY'S: LOCKDOWN XBOX	UBISOFT	
8	8	EVERYBODY'S GOLF PSP	SONY	
9	5	MEDIEVIL RESSURECTION PSP	SONY	
10	9	METAL GEAR ACID PSP	KONAMI	
11	3	NFSU: RIVALS PSP	EA	
12	NEW	INCREDIBLE HULK: DESTRUCTION XBOX	VU GAMES	
13	NEW	INCREDIBLE HULK: DESTRUCTION PS2	VU GAMES	
14	NEW	LUMINES PSP	UBISOFT	
15	NEW	DYNASTY WARRIORS PSP	KOEI	
16	10	MIDNIGHT CLUB 3 DUB EDITION PSP	ROCKSTAR	
17	NEW	CODED ARMS PSP	KONAMI	
18	15	DELTA FORCE BLACK HAWK DOWN PS2	NOVALOGIC	
19	7	VIRTUAL TENNIS: WORLD TOUR PSP	SEGA	
20	NEW	APE ACADEMY PSP	SONY	

PLAYSTATION 2 [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER	CHART TRACK
1		**INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION** DEVELOPER: RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT PUBLISHER: VU GAMES		
2	4	DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN	NOVALOGIC	3
3	1	BRIAN LARA CRICKET 2005	CODEMASTERS	2
4	6	DIGIMON WORLD 4	ATARI	-
5	NEW	TOM CLANCY'S: LOCKDOWN	UBISOFT	1
6	2	RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK FILE	CAPCOM	-
7	5	187 RIDE OR DIE	UBISOFT	-
8	NEW	COLOSSEUM: ROAD TO FREEDOM	KOEI	-
9	NEW	JUICED	EA	32
10	NEW	DESTROY ALL HUMANS	THQ	-







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XBOX [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER	CHART TRACK
1		**TOM CLANCY'S: LOCKDOWN** DEVELOPER: UBISOFT PUBLISHER: UBISOFT		
2	NEW	INCREDIBLE HULK: DESTRUCTION	VU GAMES	5
3	3	MOTO GP: RACING TECHNOLOGY 3	THQ	33
4	NEW	TOM CLANCY'S: SUMMIT STRIKE	UBISOFT	39
5	2	DELTA FORCE BLACK HAWK DOWN	NOVALOGIC	-
6	4	BRIAN LARA CRICKET 2005	CODEMASTERS	2
7	RE	STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT	LUCASARTS	-
8	RE	JADE EMPIRE	MICROSOFT	-
9	8	JUICED	EA	32
10	9	CRICKET 2005	EA	20

PSP [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER	CHART TRACK
1		**RIDGE RACER** DEVELOPER: NAMCO PUBLISHER: SONY		
2	4	WORLD TOUR SOCCER	SONY	14
3	NEW	TOCA RACE DRIVER 2	CODEMASTERS	-
4	2	WIPEOUT PURE	SONY	8
5	NEW	COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005	CODEMASTERS	-

NINTENDO DS [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER	CHART TRACK
1		**SUPER MARIO 64** DEVELOPER: NINTENDO PUBLISHER: NINTENDO		
2	NEW	ANOTHER CODE: TWO MEMORIES	NINTENDO	-
3	NEW	TOM CLANCY'S: CHAOS THEORY	UBISOFT	29
4	NEW	MADAGASCAR	ACTIVISION	11
5	1	WARIO WARE TOUCHED!	NINTENDO	-

PC CD-ROM [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER	CHART TRACK
1		**DUNGEN SIEGE II** DEVELOPER: MICROSOFT PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT		
2	1	WORLD OF WARCRAFT	VU GAMES	-
3	NEW	WARCRAFT 3: REIGN OF CHAOS	VU GAMES	-
4	5	GUILD WARS	NCSOFT	-
5	NEW	WARCRAFT 3: EXPANSION PACK	VU GAMES	-

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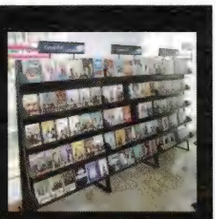

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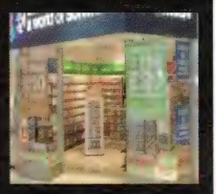

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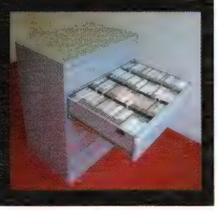

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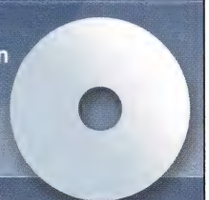

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LETTERS

An early adopter discusses why he's traded in his PSP this week, while Prism Leisure's telesales department might be short by one member of staff after his bosses discovered his letters to MCV. Also, a touching tribute to John Pirie...

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"Early adopter"

I'm a passionate, impartial early adopter and bought a US PSP in March. Over the four months I had the PSP there unfortunately wasn't really much going on gaming-wise after launch. In all that time, it would average out at me buying a new game a month just because I wanted to get some use of out it.

I got *WipEout Pure, Ridge Racer* and *Lumines* at launch, with *Everybody's Golf, Midnight Club DUB Edition* (awful loading times), *NBA Street Showdown* (surprisingly fun) and *FIFA Soccer* following on after. I'd say that the first four are must-haves.

The film capabilities were quite impressive. I was amazed at watching *Spider-Man 2* on the plane, which I have to say was excellent - and there was always someone looking to see what it was. It was essentially a portable DVD player but it played games too! Amazing.

Unfortunately though, Sony has made it rather annoyingly difficult to put your own movies onto the PSP. There simply isn't an easy way to do it. Factor in the price of a 1GB Memory Stick, which again really is a must if you want to take advantage of the video capabilities, and that added £100 instantly to the price of my PSP. Then it wasn't looking such a great idea...

It was all sold a few weeks ago when I was becoming disillusioned with the lack of new games and complexities with music, videos, etc. It seems to be a bit of a strange time to launch it in the UK with the 360 so close behind it. I personally think that the 360 Core Pack will certainly harm sales. A potential buyer could easily be put off in a shop by being shown the 360 and having only to pay £30 difference. The Core Pack will be an excellent tool for Microsoft to put people off the PSP. The difference in price is minor. The product is major.

The DS now seems to be gathering steam with its game release schedule and I've just recently bought again, with *Nintendogs* being the deciding factor. Games seem to be incredibly cheap in comparison and I find the build quality of the DS to be that bit more sturdy and robust.

With regards to the PSP, I'll most likely buy one again next year when there are genuinely a few titles I want to play on it. And I would expect - or should I say hope - to see a price drop in that time as I know demand is high.

Mike Litman,
Via Email

"Misunderstanding"

Further to the letters printed in recent issues of *MCV* from Julian Van Marle regarding supermarket policies and the effect on the independent retailer *(MCV 2/9)*, Prism Leisure wishes to state categorically that these views belong solely to Julian Van Marle and in no way represent the company's corporate view or opinion.

Julian is employed by Prism Leisure as a telesales representative responsible for servicing the independent retailers and his comments as printed in *MCV* are prompted by his association with the independent sector - and are naturally biased towards his account base. These letters were regrettably submitted without company knowledge or approval.

Whilst acknowledging the challenges that are faced in today's marketplace by the independent retailers, we apologise for any misunderstanding or offence which may have arisen from the publication of these letters.

Vaughan Bendell,
Operations Director,
Prism Leisure

John Pirie

Like many people in the business I was shocked to hear that John had died last week. I had known John for nearly 20 years. Although we were never friends in the accepted sense of the word, like most business friendships we tended to socialise more when mutual business interests dictated, or trade shows and industry events threw us together.

I first met John when we were on opposite sides of a joint venture in 1986. The JV was 'Channel 5 Video', which was pioneering video 'sell-through' - John worked for the Heron Corporation (which was heavily investing in film production) and I was working for Polygram. We both headed our respective commercial organisations, and the JV used John's sales and merchandising team for distribution.

We reported to a board director from each company, and to say these guys had an ego would be an understatement; they were serious party animals and liked a certain kind of cigarette! They shared an office, and John and I would attend monthly board meetings with them. When we entered their office it was the epitome of the smoke-filled room, and John and I would come out sky high.

The Heron Corporation was a high profile UK company owned by Gerald Ronson, a larger-than-life character, whose public profile became even larger when the Guinness Scandal broke. John used to attend the monthly Heron board meetings and would regale me with stories of Ronson's management style.

Allegedly, Alex Ferguson would have to go some to match the Ronson hairdryer treatment, and I'd always try to meet John for a beer after one of these meetings - I can see him now mimicking the expletives and bollickings to execs (himself included - no one was safe).

Along with Tim Christian and Jon Treanor, JP and I were among the first execs to cross the road from 'video films' to 'video games'; many of our contemporaries in the film business thought we were crazy. Well we were, however I know we all got a kick out of being involved in a youthful, dynamic industry with so much potential. John and I worked together again in 1999 when I was downsizing the Psygnosis worldwide publishing operation, and I did a deal with John at GT to handle the European distribution of PC titles.

Last time I saw John was when I called on him at Banbury when he was at Silicon Dreams - as always we compared notes, checked on the latest industry gossip and talked about our respective families. I deeply regret now that I didn't take the initiative to take our friendship to a more social level - I'd like to think we would have become real friends.

All too often business friendships are paper-thin, based on mutual vested interest. Although it's the way of the world, John's passing should make us all think about valuing and nurturing strong business friendships beyond the obvious business motives that initiate many such friendships.

John Bickley,
Genemation

"An avid fan"

We've celebrated Clubskill's senior news editor's 16th birthday. Now he wants to thank us all...

I wanted to say thanks for writing about my birthday in *MCV (2/9)* in Barbed Wires. I picked up your magazine at Games Market Europe, and I read the said article on the train journey back home, and was pleasantly surprised to find you talking about me.

This has also helped out our visits and hits this month, so thank you very much.

I am now an avid fan of *MCV*, but at the present moment in time I can't afford a subscription, as I am saving up for the Xbox 360 like everyone else.

Finally, I hope you can pay a few more visits to www.clubskill.com, as we certainly pay a lot of attention to what your magazine has to say about the industry at the moment.

Chris Holmes,
Senior News Editor,
www.clubskill.com

- Chris, have a subscription to your favourite games trade weekly on us. Consider it a belated birthday present.

[QUOTE OF THE WEEK]

> *700 million phones are sold globally each year. Only 500 million consoles have been sold in the last 10 years. Who's the daddy now?*
> **David Gosen** P6

OFF THE RECORD

Off The Record takes a look at the burning issues in the gaming industry as we ask: Can MCV survive without smut on the back page? Who'll be the first to land a rotten tomato in Minkley's face? Can the ladies resist Jason Falcus' sex appeal? And does BH's Leo Tan have a spandex-wearing alter ego?

SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO OFFTHERECORD@INTENTMEDIA.CO.UK

Latex Koch
After a number of complaints to the OTR Hotline about some of the content in this column over the past few weeks, *MCV* is turning over a new leaf and has banned the smut. So, we're not going to mention anything about staff at Koch brandishing large latex weapons in their lunch break, ramming them forcefully at colleagues and collapsing, sweating profusely, after they were all spent. No, you see it was all perfectly innocent as they were just trying out special weapons they've have made to promote the upcoming *Kingdom Under Fire: Heroes* on Xbox. You were obviously making up your own Koch gags.

Gamers step forward
A new monthly games tournament called Trueplayerz kicks off on Sunday September 25th. Sponsored by UK Online and organised by Joystick Junkies, Trueplayerz will give entrants the chance to play new games, plus win prizes and cash for a charity of their choice. Held at The Marquee Club, Leicester Square, tournament games include *Burnout Revenge*, *FIFA 2006*, *Battlefield 2* and *Capcom Fighting Jam* (all on console). TMF will also be screening an exclusive preview of new TV series Game One, which will air every Sunday at 3.30pm. The channel will be giving an exclusive Game One iPod cover to all competitors.

And if you're still not sure whether to head down, the industry's finest rockers Gunstar Heroes (featuring *MCV* editor Johnny Minkley) and The Alps will be playing at the after party. For more information visit www.joystickjunkies.com/trueplayerz.

Falcus chest hair shocker
Poor Jason Falcus from Atomic Planet. He goes out to celebrate the signing of lucrative new studio contracts with his brother, TIGA's Fred Hasson and the lads from Team 17... and this happens. Because we're being nice this week, we won't go into detail about how he got into this state and where the night ended up. But rumour has it that apparently there's a video doing the rounds, including some incriminating evidence of groin-tampering from a certain Mr. Hasson.

> *Our ability to keep the smut quota down is really being tested this week.*

Schoolboy error
Sony's PSP has got off to a flying start, but it seems the up-to-the-minute technology has been flummoxing some people who really should know better. Indie retailers have been reporting that a number of kids have been taking PSP UMD games back to stores, having pulled them to pieces thinking they needed to get the disc out of the case which slots into the PSP. The shame...

BH in squashed-crotch horror vid?
Our ability to keep the smut quota down is really being tested this week. The boys from *GamesTM* down in Bournemouth think the chap on the left looks a lot like PR bod Leo Tan from Barrington Harvey. Quite frankly, we don't care, but we had to print the pic as it's the funniest thing we've seen for a long time.

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OUR SURVEY SAID

PSP SCREEN

Q Does your PSP screen have any dead pixels?

Yes 41%

No 25%

What's a dead pixel? 34%

Total number of votes cast: **6,657**

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Intent Media specialises in trade titles for entertainment and leisure markets. As well as *MCV*, Intent publishes **PC Retail** for retailers and suppliers to the computer trade, **Develop Magazine** for games programmers, producers and artists and **ToyNews** for all sectors of the toy industry.

Intent launched its fifth trade magazine, **Mobile Entertainment**, earlier this year. For more information go to www.mobile-ent.biz

MCV

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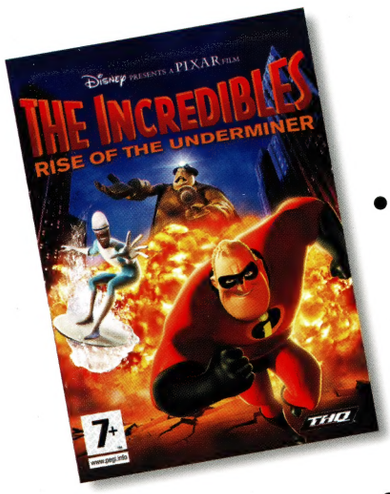

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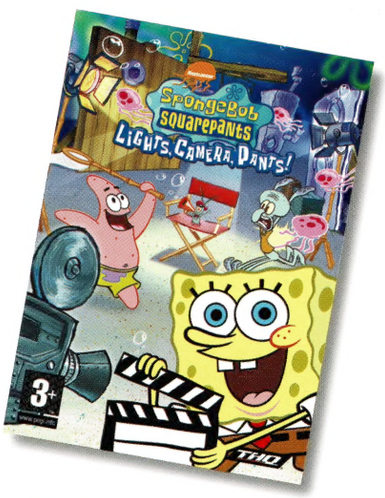

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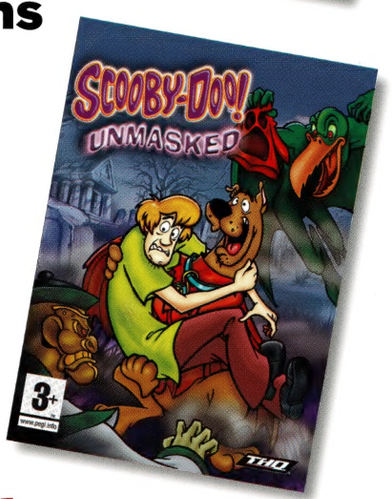

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